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THE LIFE OF KRISHNA IN INDIAN ART

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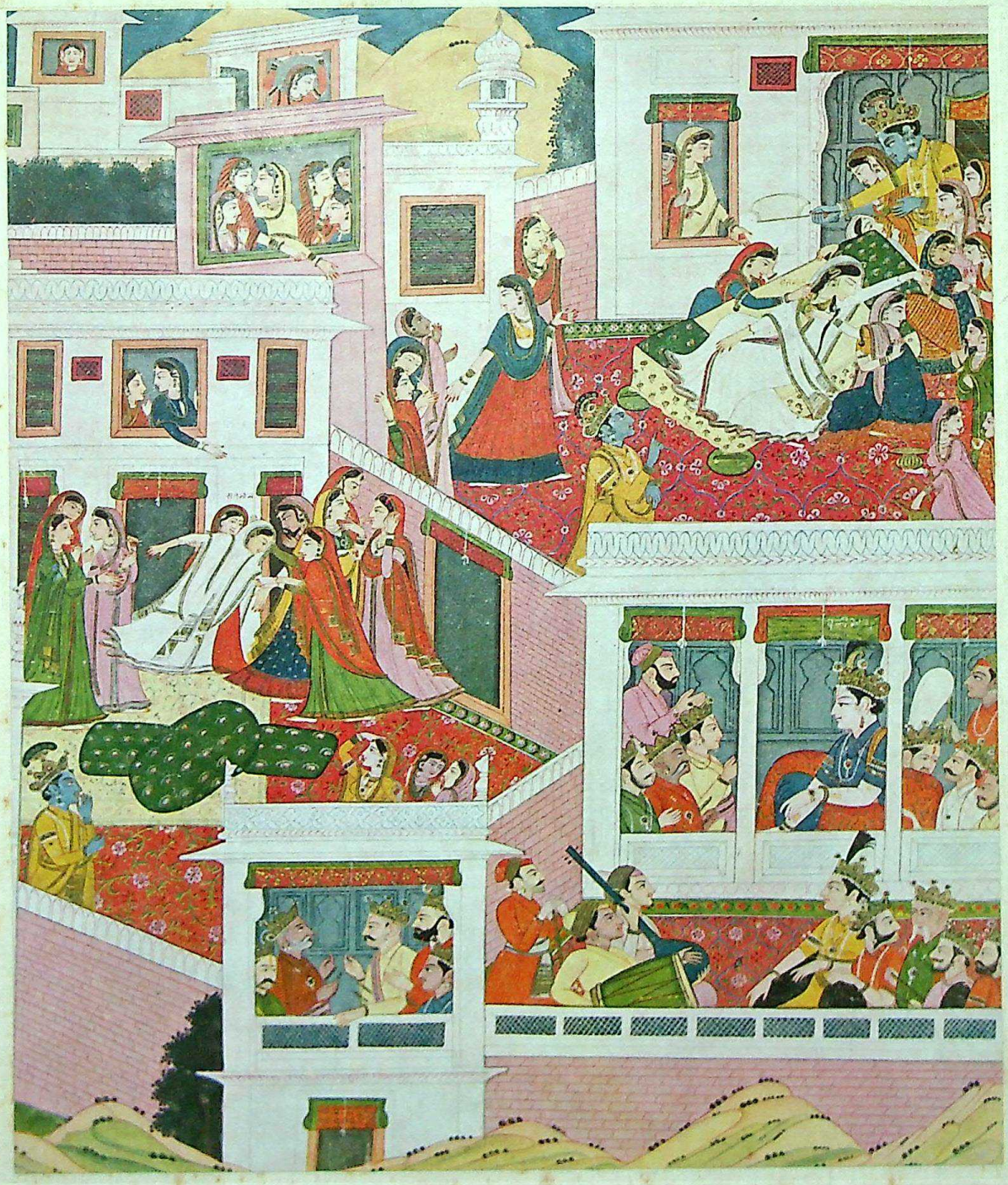

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THE LIFE OF KRISHNA IN INDIAN ART

P. BANERJEE

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First Published 1978

Layout & Book Design
B. S. Bist

Price Rs. 240/-

Colour Plates 23: Monochrome 283

Sole Distributors
Publications Division, Patiala House, New Delhi, 110001

Published by the National Museum, New Delhi
Printed by Messrs Lalchand Roy & Co. (P) Ltd., 7 & 7/1 Grant Lane, Calcutta-700012

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Dedicated to
C. Sivaramamurti
an eminent scholar of Indian art and culture
as a mark of the author's profound regard and gratitude

P. Banerjee

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FOREWORD

CENTURIES have run into millennia in India in the tradition of the narration of cradle tales from the two great epics, that have provided not only a deep and abiding ideal education, rooted in ethical principles, far transcending the glamour of mere literacy, but also moulded the character of the people in consonance with the highest thought in didactic literature of rare quality, gathered mainly through the ear, in the established mode of *śruta*. This accounts for what we learn from medieval Indian inscriptions that state the provision made by the kings for the reading and exposition of select portions from the epics, for the education and sublimation of the villagers, young and old, lettered and unlettered, in the *sabhā* and *vyākhyāna-maṇḍapas*, spacious pillared halls in the large temples that abounded in the villages.

In the noblest spirit of appreciation of the great national epic and its purport, Ānandavardhana, the doyen of rhetoricians in India, has in unequivocal exposition given *śānti* or peace as the dominating flavour in the *Mahābhārata*, which combines in itself instruction and poetry; and as he shows clearly, its concluding note of despair on the hapless destruction of the Vrishṇis and the Pāṇḍavas, reveals the anxiety of its saintly author to primarily expound the moral of renunciation as a means to final emancipation or *moksha* as the highest of human values, *purushārthas: mahābhārate' pi śāstrarūpe kāvyachchhāyānvayini vrishṇipāṇḍavavira-sāvasānavaimanasyadāyinīm samāptim up-anibadhnatā mahāmuninā vairāgyajana-natātparyam prādhānyena svaprabandhasya darśayatā mokshalakshaṇaḥ purshārthas śānto rasas cha mukhyatayā vivakshāvishayatvena sūchitaḥ, Dhvanyāloka* 4.5.

As the greatest expounder of the charm of suggestion, Ānandavardhana demonstrates how Vyāsa has effectively conveyed all this meaning through the implied sense in the sentence 'the eternal Lord Vāsudeva is herein glorified'. He expatiates further by exhorting the readers to be devoted to Him, the supreme Lord, to desist from passion for empty material gains, or even attachment to such qualities, however much desirable in themselves, like statesmanship, modesty and valour. He holds that this beautiful inner truth is revealed in his act of appending the *Harivaṁśa* as the finale of the *Mahābhārata* to sing the glory of *Hari: satyaṁ śāntasyaiva rasasyāṅgitvaṁ mahābhārate mokshasya cha sarvapurushārthebhyaḥ prādhānyam ityetanna svaśabdābhidheyatvenānukramaṇyām darśitam, darśitam tu vyaṅgyatvena-'bhagavān vāsudevas cha kīrtyate' tra sanātanaḥ' ityasmin vākye anena hyayam artho vyaṅgyatvena vivakshito yadatra mahābhārate pāṇḍavādicharitam yat kīrtyate, tat sarvam avasānavirasam avidyāpra-pañcharūpaṁ cha, paramārthasatyasvarūpas tu bhagavān vāsudevo' tra kīrtyate, tasmāt tasminneva parameśvare bhagavati bhavata bhāvitachetaso, mā bhūta vibhūtishu nissārāsu rāgiṇo, guṇeshu vā nayavinayaparākramādi-shvamīshu kevaleshu keshu chit sarvātmanā pratinivishṭadhiyaḥ, Dhvanyāloka* 4.5.

The *purushārthas* themselves have been most marvellously analysed in the *Bhāgavata*, and here the final beatitude or *moksha* has been given the highest place to secure which *artha* and *kāma* strive through *dharma*. *Artha* cannot be the means of *dharma*, since the latter itself is the means for *moksha*. Still *artha* is mainly to win *dharma*, and hence cannot be made the means of *kāma: dharmasya hyapavargasya nārtho' rthāyopakal-pate, nārthasya dharmaikāntasya kāmo lābhāya hi smṛitaḥ, Bhāgavata* I.2.9. The unfailing path in the direction of obtaining this beatitude lies in the intense devotion towards the Lord Vāsudeva which speedily vouchsafes the spirit of renunciation, *vairāgya*, and right perception, *jñāna*, that arises in its train without any effort: *vāsudeve bhagavati bhaktiyogaḥ prayojitaḥ, janayatyāśu vairāgyam jñānam cha yad ahaitukam, Bhāgavata* I.2.7.

In his *Kusumāñjali*, which bristles with quotations from the Lord's Song, *Bhagavadgītā*, Udayana recalls the birth of Kṛishṇa as the assuming of bodily form by the Lord and shows how though He had no need to be up and doing (*na me pārthāsti kartavyam trishu lokeshu kiñchana*), He acted only to set the world to follow his example: *gṛihṇātīśvaropi kāryavaśāchchharīram antar-āntarā darśayati cha vibhūtim iti atrāpyāgamaḥ pitāmahasya jagato mātā dātā pitāmahaḥ, tathā, yadi hyahaṁ na varteyaṁ jātu karmaṇya-*

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tandritaḥ, mama vartmānuvartante manushyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ, utsīdeyur ime lokā na kuryām karma ched aham, Nyāyakusumāñjali 5.5. How *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* is ultimately devotion in thought, word and deed to Vāsudeva as experienced by the greatest in every path like *ishṭa, pūrta, tapas* and *yama, niyama* and *āsana* of *yoga* is recalled by him from *Sāṅkhyapravachana* and the *Bhagavadgītā: anuśishyate cha sāṅkhyapravachane īśvarapraṇidhānam, tam imam jyotishṭomādibhir ishṭaih, prāsādādinā pūrtena, śītātapasahanādinā tapasā, ahimsādibhir yamaiḥ, āsanaprāṇāyāmādinā yogena maharshayo'pi vividishanti tasmin jñāte sarvam idam jñātam bhavatītyevaṁ vijñāya śrutyekatānas tatparo bhavet yatredam gīyate—manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī mām namaskuru, māmeveshyasi yuktvaivam ātmānam matparāyāṇaḥ, bhoktāram yajñatapasāṁ sarvalokamaheśvaraṁ, suhṛidam sarvabhūtānām jñatvā mām śāntim ṛichchhati iti, Nyāyakusumāñjali* 5.17.

The great exponent of Advaita, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī confesses that in spite of all his exposition of Nirguṇabrahma he cannot think of the Absolute Reality as anything apart from That Whose hand is adorned by the flute, Whose hue is similar to the fresh laden cloud, attired in yellow silk, with lips crimson like the ripe *bimba*, face charming like the full moon and eyes pleasant like the lotus: *vaṁśīvibhūshitakarān navanīradābhāt pītāṁbarād aruṇabimba-phalādharoshṭhāt, pūrṇendusundaramukhād aravindanetrāt kṛishṇāt paramkim api tatvam aham na jāne, Subodhinī* on *Gītā* 18.78, not unlike Līlāśuka, who, though of a family of Śaivas, deeply engrossed in the chant of the *Śivapañchāksharī*, has, however, his mind ever recalling the baby of the milkmaids charming in His azure hue of the Atasī flower with His face wreathed in smiles: *śaivā vayaṁ na khalu tatra vichāraṇīyam pāñchāksharījaparatā nitarāṁ tathāpi, cheto madīyam ataśīkusumāvabhāsam śmerānanaṁ smarati gopavadhūkiśoram, Kṛishṇakarṇāṁṛita* 2.24.

The ascetic Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, who commented gloriously on the *Advaitasiddhi* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, like the author, of whom he is the commentator, sings of the Parabrahma or the Absolute as a reality in the form of only Kṛishṇa, who is the supreme witness to corroborate the identity of Jīvātmā and Paramātmā, as He demonstrated it by satisfying the hunger of the universe by Himself tasting a fragment of vegetable offered by Draupadī: *draupadīśākam āsvādya trilokī yena tarpitā, tajjīvabrahmaṇor aikye sākshī brahmaiva no hariḥ, Gauḍabrahmānandī* on *Advaitasiddhi* 2. For those of the Brahmavādins who would still concentrate on a search for the Upanishadic Truth by wearisome wandering in the woods of Vedic texts, there is the vision held out by a devotee who points to it lying tied to the mortar in the houses of the milkmaids where He should be searched: *varam imam upadeśam ādriyadhvam nigamavaneshu nitāntachārakhinnāḥ, vichinuta bhavaneshu vallavīnām upanishadartham ulūkhale nibaddham, Kṛishṇakarṇāmṛita* 2.28.

For Rāghavachaitanya, Kṛishṇa is the totality of the love and affection of the milkmaids, *gopīs*, the entire fortune of the Yadu race personified, the guarded treasure of the *Vedas* rolled into one and the Absolute Reality in dark hue represented: *pūñjībhūtam prema gopāṅganānām mūrtībhūtam bhāgadheyam yadūnām, ekībhūtam guptavittaṁ śrutīnām śyāmībhūtam brahma me sannidhattām.*

Speaking in allegory, Līlāśuka directs the pilgrim in quest of the abode of solace, to reach yonder stately Arjuna tree, traverse the path beyond it that leads to the *ghosha*, (meaning both village of cowherds and the sacred sound *Om*), in the vicinity of which flows Yamunā, on whose bank, in the glade of the Tamāla trees, plays the cowboy, grazing His herd of cows, Who would show the unassailable path of glory: *agre dīrghataroyam arjunatarus tasyāgrato vartanī sā ghosham samupaiti tatparisare deśe kalindātmajā, tasyās tīratamālakānanatale chakraṁ gavām chārayan gopaḥ krīḍati darśayishyati sakhe panthānam avyāhatam, Kṛishṇakarṇāmṛita.* 2.43.

Sadāśiva Brahmendra, than whose exposition of the *Brahmasūtras* and *Yogasūtras* there is no more lucid commentary, has sung in simple telling songs exhorting the tongue to utter the names Mukunda, Keśava, Mādhava, Govinda, Kṛishṇa, Ānanda, Sadānanda: *brūhi mukundeti rāsane brūhi mukundeti, keśava mādhava govindeti krishṇānanda sadānandeti.* Yati Narāyaṇatīrtha prays to Kṛishṇa in his sweet songs asking the cowboy to come to him and give him joy *ehi mudaṁ mama dehi;* and in another, to fulfil his desire by granting him His lovely vision as he himself considered Him as the celestial Mādhava that assumed the guise of a human through His own power of illusion, the Creator of the universe and the Omnipotent and understood in His reality by only the fortunate few: *pūraya mama kāmam, gopāla pūraya mama kāmam, manye tvām iha mādhava daivaṁ māyāsvīkṛitamānushabhāvam, dhanyair ādṛitatattvasvabhāvam dhātāram jagatām ativibhavam, pūraya mama kāmam, Kṛishṇalīlātaraṅgiṇī.*

Well can Kālidāsa say *yena śyāmam vapur atitarāṁ kāntim āpatsyate te barheṇeva spuritaruchinā gopaveshasya vishṇoḥ, Meghadūta* 1.15, describing the lovely blue form of Vishṇu with its charm enhanced by the peacock feather He wore in the guise He assumed of a cowboy. And Jayadeva would

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fain picture Kṛishṇa in exactly the same alluring beauty of form, decked with the sparkling peacock feather encircling His hair-do, recalling the dark laden cloud, beautiful by the colourful rainbow in its proximity: *chandrakachārumayūraśikhaṇḍakamaṇḍalavalayitakeśam prachurapurandaradhanuranurañjitameduramudirasuvesham, Gīta Govinda*, 3. Māgha would almost repeat the idea of Kālidāsa *gopaveshasya vishṇoḥ* by starting his *Śiśupālavadha* with the epithet *Śriyaḥ patiḥ* for Kṛishṇa and elaborating his human simulation by describing Him as the Lord, the Dweller of the universe, living in Vasudeva's palace in Dvārakā: *śriyaḥ patiḥ śrīmati śāsitum jaggajjagannivāso vasudevasadmani, vasan dadarśāvatarantam ambarād hiraṇyagarbhāṅgabhuvam muniṁ hariḥ, Śiśupālavadha* 1.1.

The royal devotee Kulaśekhara pictures Him in every way as a sparkling gem of purest ray serene, the emerald green Garuḍa to overcome the serpentine travails of devotees, the protecting gem of the three worlds, the gem of a laden cloud for the thirst of the *chātaka* birdlike eyes of *Gopīs*, the gem to set a seal on the finality of beauty, the dearest gem for the beloved ones, the one gem jewel on the youthful breasts of Rukmiṇī, the gem on the crown of all the celestials that vouchsafes the best for all: *bhaktāpāyabhujaṅgagāruḍamaṇis trailokyarakshāmāṇir gopīlochanachātakāmbudamaṇiḥ saundaryamudrāmaṇiḥ yaḥ kāntāmaṇirukmiṇīghanakuchadvandvaikabhūshāmiṇis śreyo devaśikhamaṇir diśātu no gopālachūḍāmaṇiḥ, Mukundamālā.*

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda no doubt starts his *bhāshya* on the *Gītā* by elaborating the highest philosophical contribution made by the Lord who chose to be born to alleviate the miseries of the world. The Lord, always abundant in knowledge, dominance, potence, power, virility and luminosity, controls His threefold delusion namely the primeval source, is the unborn and unaging Master of all elements, is eternally immaculate, sentient, unfettered, and yet, through His own delusion, appears to assume a form as One born to favour the world. Though it is of no consequence to Him, out of His grace for the world, He taught the two scriptural ways of life (*vaidikam dharmadvayam*) to Arjuna immersed in an ocean of grief and delusion, since the right mode of life (*dharma*) learnt and practised by the highest in character alone would grow and flourish. This mode as taught by the Lord was recorded in seven hundred verses of the *Gītā* by the venerable omniscient Vedavyāsa: *sa cha bhagavān jñānaiśvaryaśaktibalavīryatejobhis sadā sampannas triguṇātmikām svām māyām mūlaprakṛitim vaśīkṛitya, ajovyayo bhūtānām iśvāro nityaśuddhabuddhamuktasvabhāvo'pi san, svamāyayā dehavān iva jāta iva lokānugraham kurvan lakshyate svaprayojanābhāvepi bhūtānujighṛikshayā vaidikaṁ dharmadvayam arjunāya śokamohamahodadhau nimagnāya upadideśa, guṇādhikair hi grihītonushṭhīyamānaścha dharmaḥ prachayam gamishyatīti, tam dharmam bhagavatā yathopadishṭam vedavyāsas sarvajño bhagavān gītākhyais saptabhis ślokaśatair upanibabandha, Gītābhāshya* 1.1. Śaṅkara well realises as he states in his *Brahmānuchintana* that his inner self is the eternal Vāsudeva which realisation alone brings salvation: *ahameva param brahma vāsudevākhyam avyayam, iti syānniśchito mukto baddha evānyathā bhavet.* All the time the one thought in his mind is Govinda, as his exhortation stresses the utterance of that name, rather than spell recondite aphorisms, which are of no avail for deliverance at the final hour: *bhaja govindam bhaja govindam bhaja govindam mūḍhamate, samprāpte sannihite kāle nahi nahi rakshati ḍukriṅkaraṇe, Mohamudgara* 1. On the other hand *Bhagavadgītā*, however little studied, has an influence in winning over even Death: *bhagavadgītā kiñchid adhītā sakṛid api yena... yamena na charchā, Mohamudgara* 20. For Śaṅkara, the erudite philosopher, Kṛishṇa, the Lord of the Yādavas, is the one supreme flavour of eternal bliss, the essence of existence and intelligence, self-luminous, the Perfect Being unborn and the dominant: *nityānandaikarasam sachchinmātram svayamjyotiḥ, purushottamam ajam īśam vande śrīyādavādhīśam, Prabodhasudhākara* 1. For him *bhakti* in Kṛishṇa so appeals that he even denounces *apavarga* and almost gives up asceticism. There are those, who desirous of the despicable fruit of enjoyment of empty longings, indulge in purposeful adoration, there are others who strive for the sweets of heaven or the bliss of beatitude through sacrifices performed or asceticism practised, for me and those of my ilk, whose only desire is to pointedly meditate on the feet of the Lord of Yadus, fie on the mundane pleasures, asceticism, royal favours, heavenly altitude or even the highest beatitude: *kāmyopāsanayā' rthayantyanudinam kiñchitphalam svepsitam kiñchitsvargam athāpavargam aparair yogādiyajñādibhiḥ, asmākam yadunandanāṅghriyugaladhyānāvadhānārthinām kim lokena damena kim nṛipatinā svārgāpavargaiś cha kim, Prabodhasudhākara* 250.

Yet Śaṅkara the ascetic cannot escape the innate longing for ruminating on the infantile frolic and wondrous exploits of baby Kṛishṇa in Gokula, and his *Govindāshṭaka* shows how he bursts into a joyous alleluia. Bow to Govinda, the limit of joy, verity, science, infinity, eternity, beyond space, limit of ether, who delights in crawling in the forecourt of the cowshed, unwearied but supreme in effort, creating multiform unto Himself by His own illusive power, though Himself formless, and yet of the form of the universe, the lord of Earth and Prosperity, Himself lorded over by none. Bow to Govinda, the limit of joy, that pretended infantile fear at the threat of a beating by Yaśodā for eating

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dust and opened wide His mouth for her to see a strange sight of the mountains at the farthest limit of the fourteen worlds and the worlds themselves, the pivotal column of the city of the three worlds, the light of the world and its sustenance, the lord of the world and the highest. Bow to Govinda, the limit of joy, the destroyer of the heroic foes of the celestials, the end to the wearisome burden of the Earth in the wicked, the cure for the ills of transmigration, the absolute, whose food is butter though He eats not and yet is the food of the universe, the exceedingly luminous in heart of immaculate purity, the very reality (opposed to the semblance of a shadow), the auspicious, the essence of peace. Bow to Govinda the limit of joy, the cowherd, the protector of the earth in the guise of a cow, the protector of the entire race, the fond cowherd fondling the cowherds and sporting with the milkmaids by raising up the Govardhana hill, Govinda by name clearly pronounced by words of utterance, yet known by a myriad names and remote from the comprehension of mortal senses: *satyam jñānam anantam nityam anākāśam paramākāśam, goshṭhaprāṅgaṇariṅkhaṇalolam anāyāsam paramāyāsam, māyākalpitanānākāram anākāram bhuvanākāram, kshmāmānātham anātham praṇamata govindam paramānandam mṛitsnām attīheti yaśodātāḍanaśaiśavasamtrāsam vyāditavaktrālokitalokālokachaturdaśalokālim, lokatrayapuramūlastambham lokālokam anālokam lokeśam parameśam praṇamata govindam paramānandam. traivishṭaparipuvīraghnam kshitibhāraghnam bhavarogaghnam kaivalyam navanītāhāram anāhāram bhuvanāhāram, vaimalyasphuṭachetovṛittiviśeshābhāsam anābhāsam śaivam kevalaśāntam praṇamata govindam paramānandam. gopālam bhūlīlāvigrahagopālam kulagopālam gopīkhelanagovardhanadhṛitilīlālālitagopālam, gobhir nigaditagovindasphuṭanāmānam bahunāmānam gopīgocharadūram praṇamata govindam paramānandam, Govindāshṭaka* 1.4.

This feigned fear of the infant Kṛishṇa alluded to by Śaṅkara occurs in the picture of Kṛishṇa the child fondly recalled by Kuntī, as the mischievous offender that smashed milk pots, driving Yaśodā to take up a cord to tie Him up, as He stood head bent down in great fear, His bewildered eyes filled with tears dissolving the collyrium, as the sight really baffled her, to think of Him, of whom Fear itself was afraid, as appearing terrorstruck: *gopyādade tvayi kṛitāgasi dāma tāvad yā te daśāśrukalilāñjanasambhramāksham, vaktram ninīya bhayabhāvanayā sthitasya sā mām vimohayati bhīr api yadbibheti Bhāgavata* 1.8.31.

The real truth is put in the mouth of Bhagavān himself by Bhāsa, who makes the child converse with the demon Arishṭa who foolishly remarks that being a child Kṛishṇa does not know fear, only to get it back hot from the unafraid child as a question put "what is it called fear which only now I hear from you? Know that I am born on the earth only to dispel the fear of those that are afraid: *arishṭarshabhaḥ:- bho bālas tvam ataḥ khalu bhayam na jānāsi. Damodaraḥ: kim etad bho bhayam nāma bhavatodya mayā śrutam, bhītānām abhayam dātum samutpanno mahītale, Bālacharita* 3.5.

But revealing oneself is one thing and to convince another of ones own conviction is another. A firm and rooted predilection overrules perception of even an almost obvious and established proposition. It invites indeed a chuckle in any one who recalls the delightfully amusing picture of the Lord as baby Kṛishṇa, delighting the milkmaids, touching each with His tender finger shoot as He is queried where was His face, His eye, His nose, His ear, His crest: *kvānanam kva nayanam kva nāsikā kva śrutiḥ kva cha śikheti deśitaḥ, tatra tatra vihitāṅgulīdalo vallavīkulam anandayat prabhuḥ* as described by Dhoyī who was also known as Kavirāja. No wonder, Kṛishṇa, the harbinger of joy to the celestials, was understood differently by different spectators beholding Him, was to the innocent cowherds just one of their own, a commonplace cowboy, while the wrestlers considered Him almost a mountain, the common folk taking Him for a child, the damsels of Vraja mistaking Him for Cupid, Indra the wielder of the thunderbolt as the unfathomable embodied universe, by the fear-blinded Kamsa as Death itself furious, and by the ascetics as the target of their meditation: *mallais śailendrakalpas śiśur itarajanaiḥ, pushpachāpoṅganābhir gopais tu prākritātmā divi kuliśabhṛitā viśvakāyoprameyaḥ, kruddhaḥ kamsena kālo bhayachakitadṛiśā yogibhir dhyeyamūrtir dṛishṭo raṅgāvatāre harir amaraganānandakṛit pātu yushmān, Kiṛshṇakarṇāmṛita* 2,102.

Even the inveterate enemy Kamsa confesses, in the words of Venkatanātha, that the little baby became on enigma, baffling all attempts to overcome Him, as He had demonstrated His claim to fame of His prowess by destroying Pūtanā, upturning the monstrous cart, uprooting the Arjuna trees, banishing Kālīya, holding up Govardhana, reducing Arishṭa, huge as a mountain, Dhenuka and Pralamba, drinking up the immense forest conflagration and tearing asunder the snake Agha, huge like the Vindhya: *nihatā pṛithukena pūtanā śakaṭam tat parivartitam mahat, kakubhadvitayam nipātitam prahitaḥ kvāpi nipiḍya kāliyaḥ sa cha gomukhavardhano dadhe śamitaḥ kshobham arishṭaparvataḥ; prathitaścha balaḥ pralambajit nidhanam dhenukadānavo gataḥ davahavyavahaścha jagrase vishadhrit vindhyasamo vidāritaḥ iti nāma vijṛimbhaṇe ripor alam ekaikam alaṅghyatāsthite, Yādavābhyudaya* 9.2-4. No wonder

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his name was on the lips of one and all; and it was mostly in affection, devotion and joy. It is no different from the adoration of Rāma, not only in Ayodhyā in his own time, *rāmo rāmo rāma iti tatra sañjajñire kathāḥ*, but through the centuries.

It is this spirit of devotion to Vāsudeva that accounts for the invocation to Him by one and all. Even *Śāstrakāras* like the Naiyāyika Viśvanātha would again introduce Him into his branch of knowledge as the cause of the effect, the universe created by Him, and salutes Krishṇa as of the hue of the new laden cloud, the thief of the silken garments of the milkmaids, the prime cause of the universe, like the seed out of which emerges the sapling that grows into the spreading tree: *nūtanajaladhararuchaye gopavadhūṭīdukūlachaurāya, tasmai kṛishṇāya namas samsāramahīruhasya bījāya, Bhāshāparichchheda* 1. A poet actually voices his predilection for the juvenile incarnation of Kṛishṇa, though there are so many more, all of them for the welfare of the world all over, and all of them of the same lotus-eyed One, and he reasons by querying whether there was another anywhere that granted final liberation even for the cows and the equally innocent illiterate cowherds and milkmaids: *avatārās santyanye sarasijanayanasya sarvato bhadrāḥ, kṛishṇād anyaḥ ko vā prabhavati gogopagopikāmuktyai, Kṛishṇakarṇāmṛita*, 2,84. The highest philosophers who thought in terms of an abstract concept like the *parabrahma*, the poets, musicians, dancers, sculptors, painters and even the bards as picture showmen, *mańkhas*, have always chosen the theme of *uttamaślokas* like Rāma and Kṛishṇa. Indeed the appeal of Kṛīshṇa and His *bālalīlās* has triumphed more than any other. His high intellectual attainments as the pupil of Ghora Āṅgirasa according to the *Chhāndogya*, and as of Sāndīpani as narrated in the *Harivaṁśa*, as the expounder of the profound song of the Lord, *Bhagavadgītā*, almost recede into the background to bring into focus his *kaiśavacheshṭita*. The Jains would claim these *līlās* for their future Tīrthaṅkara Kṛishṇa who was a cousin earlier of Neminātha, and their pictorial presentation, as at Tirupparuttikuṇram in Kāñchī, is famous.

The earliest phase of Indian sculpture has given us scenes from Kṛishṇa's life, a Śuṅga sculpture illustrating the first act of Bhāsa's *Bālacharita*. Patañjali's reference to *prāsāde dhanapatirāmakeśavānām* is amply testified by remains, epigraphic, numismatic and sculptural. The Gupta King Skandagupta in similar situation compares himself to Kṛishṇa rushing with glad tidings to His mother. While the Śuṅga turbaned Balarāma of the Lucknow Museum is the oldest, the coins of Agathocles showing both the divine brothers are equally early, the next in date being the Vāsudeva Śaṅkarshaṇa group with Ekānamśā in between from the Patna Museum, the Mathurā Museum being the proud receptacle of the early Śuṅga carving of Vasudeva carrying the baby across the Yamunā. It is a staggering treasure of sculptural and pictorial wealth inspired by an equally bewildering literary output in Sanskrit, Prakrit and vernacular by poets of our great and aesthetically fecund subcontinent.

Dr. Priyatosh Banerjee, Assistant Director of the National Museum, both by his erudition and natural inclination towards the Lord of the kine, whose inspiring life from the *Bhāgavata* was arranged to be read and expounded at his place by the saintly expounder A. C. Bhaktivedantaswamiji, has, naturally, as the fruit of so good a deed, inclined towards a detailed treatment of this noble theme of the *Uttamaśloka*, in this volume. Need I describe how thoroughly he has dealt with the several facets of Kṛishṇa's personality. The book, liberally illustrated with rare examples of plastic and pictorial perfection to illustrate his meaningful text of enduring light in the exposition of the most delightful theme in Indian thought, philosophic and aesthetic, is a great contribution. The presentation of it to the world by the National Museum should be deemed a great good fortune for the institution. My prayer is that the Lord may bestow that same affection and blessing on this composition and its author, Dr. Priyatosh Banerjee, as, in the words of Bilvamaṅgala, He bestowed on Vidura's offering, on that by Kuntī, on that shelter vouchsafed by Govardhana, on the parched rice hestitatingly held out by Kuchela, on the milk from Yaśodā's breast, on the offering of Bharadvāja and Śabarī, on the lips of the Gopī's and on the devout offerings of the wives of the Brāhmaṇas: *yā prītirvidurārpite muraripo kuntyarpite yādṛiśī yā govardhanamūrdhni yā cha pṛithuke stanye yaśodārpite, bhāradvājasamarpite śabarikādatte' dhare yoshitām yā prītir munipatnibhaktirachite' pyatrāpi tām tām kuru, Kṛishṇakarṇamṛita*, 3.107.

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Mâninî Nâyikâ, Kangra Style, late 18th century,
National Museum, New Delhi.

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PREFACE

THE main aim of this volume is to present the life of Krishṇa as delineated in Indian art. The life of Krishṇa and his teachings have had a profound influence on the mind of the Indian people and as such the theme was popular not only with the saints and the poets, but also with the artists. Krishṇaism pervades the whole Indian life, its religion, philosophy and art. The material for the study of the subject is enormous and diffused all over India in a varying degree. This volume includes most of the best examples of Indian art to represent the episodes of his life.

This volume is broadly divided into two parts, i.e. the text and illustrations. The text portion describes Krishṇa's life as portrayed in the *Purāṇas*, the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Mahābhārata*, and discusses the antiquity and historicity of Krishṇa as well as his deification and absorption into the broad framework of Vaishṇavism. It may be mentioned here that Krishṇa is a composite character, and many religious ideas and thoughts have contributed to the development of the Krishṇa legend.

The fourth chapter of the book provides a sketch of the history of the development of the Vishṇu-Krishṇa cult in different regions of India from the earliest times to the 19th century. The main feature of the developed Vaishṇavism is the fusion of the cult of Krishṇa with that of Vishṇu and Nārāyaṇa. The cult of Krishṇa and that of Vishṇu and Nārāyaṇa are so closely mixed up that it is not easy to separate them clearly.

As is well known, the *Mahābhārata*, which is older than the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*, deals with Krishṇa's later life, mentioning only incidentally here and there some of his early exploits. Similarly, the chief concern of the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas* is to describe his early life, not dealt with in the *Mahābhārata*, mentioning only a few incidents connected with his later career. Indian tradition regards the Krishṇa of the *Mahābhārata* as the same as the one of the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*. I find no objection to accepting the hoary Indian tradition and have built the chronology of Krishṇa's life accordingly in the present Volume.

I am extremely beholden to Rajamata Gayatri Devi of Jaipur who has taken a keen interest in my work and kindly instructed the City Palace Museum of Jaipur to supply me with the photographs of some very important paintings of the *Razm Nama*, one of the most valuable illustrated manuscripts of the Akbar period, in its possession. The photos of these paintings have greatly enhanced the value of my book, as they have helped me effectively to illustrate many of the *Mahābhārata* episodes in which Krishṇa played an important role. I do not know how to express my deep sense of gratitude to her for this kindness.

Many other institutions in India and abroad, including the Government Museum, Mathura, the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, the State Museum, Lucknow, the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, the Government Museum, Madras, the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda, the Punjab Museum, Chandigarh, the Indian Museum, Calcutta, the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta, the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Los Angeles County Museum, California, the Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., the British Museum, London, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, the American Academy, Banaras and the Archaeological Survey of India have also kindly supplied me with photographs to illustrate this volume. My sincere thanks are due to all of them for their kind help. I have also to express my deep sense of gratitude to Shri Haridas Swali, Bombay, who allowed me to reproduce some of his art pieces from his collection in this book and to Mrs. Roshan Sabavala, Bombay, Dr. U. P. Shah, Baroda, and Shri S. N. Varma, Simla for their kind interest in my work.

In the collection of the material and preparation of the text, I had the benefit of discussion with Shri C. Sivaramamurti, Shri M. N. Deshpande, Shri Karl J. Khandalavala, Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan, Dr. N. R. Banerjee, Dr. Ananda Krishna and Dr. B. N. Goswamy. I am deeply grateful to

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them for this. Their constant encouragement gave me confidence to proceed with the work in the midst of my multifarious and arduous official duties. Further, Shri Sivaramamurti read the text of the book and offered suggestions for improvement. He has also kindly written a learned foreword for my book. He has thus placed me under a deep debt of gratitude.

Shrimati Svasti Chaudhuri (daughter of my friend, Dr. Ananda Krishna of the Bharat Kala Bhavan) prepared for me an exhaustive list of paintings on the subject in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, which proved very useful in my work. My sincere thanks are due to her for this.

Miss R. Vanaja, Mrs. Shital Puri and Shri O. P. Sharma helped me in correcting the typed script of the book. Mr. B. S. Bist prepared its layout and Dr. C. B. Pandey and Shri Satish Bahadur helped me in seeing the book through press. Mr. P. N. K. Bambzai (Delhi) supplied me with notes on the history of Vaishṇavism in Kashmir which proved useful to me in writing the history of the Vishṇu-Krishṇa cult of this region. My thanks are due to all of them and also to my son, Shri Raghavendra Banerjee, who helped me in various ways in my work. Shri Amrik Singh and Shri Niyamatullah Shah took great pains in preparing the photographs of the National Museum paintings used in this volume. Shri Balkrishan readily supplied me with all the books that I required for writing the text. Miss Raj Rani Arora and Miss Veena Sharma typed the text of the book with great enthusiasm. I have to thank all of them for their help.

I am also thankful to Shri Dilip Roy, Director, Lalchand Roy Company Private Limited, Calcutta and Shri Sanjib Roy and Shri K. C. Mullick of the same institution for the fine printing of the book.

The late Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, who was one of the most distinguished linguists of the world, was very pleased that I took up this interesting subject for my study and asked me to finish the work early so that he could see it published before his death. Unfortunately, because of various reasons, I could not finish the work during his lifetime. His death will remain a life-long sorrow to me.

I have to say a few words regarding the arrangement of the monochrome plates. The figures 1-20 are of an introductory nature mainly showing some of the oldest representations of Krishṇa and Balarāma and the composite scenes from Krishṇa's life. The events of Krishṇa's life are shown chronologically from the figure 21 onwards. The illustrations of the *Aśvamedha Parva* are mostly from the *Razm Nama* of the Jaipur collection in which the artists have followed not the Krishṇa Dvaipāyana *Mahābhārata*, but the Jaiminī *Aśvamedha Parva*.

I undertook a difficult task and I feel that it could be completed only through the divine grace of Lord Krishṇa.

P. BANERJEE

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INTRODUCTORY

THERE is an enormous volume of literature on the life and teachings of Krishṇa. He is a composite figure and many legends and ideas have combined to constitute the frame-work of his concept. While the majority of scholars look upon him as a historical person, some consider him to be a myth or a vegetation spirit. The truth seems to be that originally he was a human being as Rāma and Buddha, but he was deified as a god, perhaps during his life time, because of the inconceivable qualities he possessed. He is the amalgam of both the divine and the human. In the *Mahābhārata*, the earliest source of his life, he is described both as man and god. From the very beginning of the Krishṇa concept it is difficult to separate the human aspect of his life from the divine. He is a grand mystery and everyone has tried to understand him in his own way, according to his spiritual light or vision. He is the embodiment of all *rasas*, and his many-sided activities have attracted the people in different ways. The yogīs considered him to be the absolute truth, the Gopīs the highest object of love, the warriors as an ideal hero and Kamsa as an object of fear and Śiśupāla as an object of hate. This idea as expressed in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* has made the Krishṇa worship broad-based. Whether one thinks of him as an object of love or hate, one attains him. Addressing Yudhishṭhira, Nārada said, "By fixing their minds on Īśvara, through love, through hate, through fear, through friendship as by devotion and thereby avoiding their sins, many have found access to Him, the Gopīs through love, Kamsa through fear, Śiśupāla and other rulers of men through hate, the Vrishṇis through relationship, you (i.e. Yudhishṭhira), O great one, by friendship, we by devotion" (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* VII. 1, 29 and 30). As the Krishṇa cult crystallised in the medieval period *parama-prema* (i.e. the desireless and attributeless *bhakti* or love) was considered the highest as the *Gītā* advocated the desireless action. Śrī Chaitanya was possessed of this attitude. This feeling has been best expressed in one of his *Śikshāshṭakas:*

न धनं न जनं न सुन्दरीं कवितां वा जगदीश कामये।
मम जन्मनि जन्मनीश्वरे भवताद्भक्तिरहैतुकी त्वयि॥

"I crave not for money, nor for men, not for a beautiful woman nor for poetic genius, O Lord of the world; in every birth of mine may *ahaitukī bhaktī*, spontaneous devotion, grow in me towards thee."

The life of Krishṇa from childhood to his last days has been a source of perennial inspiration to the poets and the artists, as he represents the perfection of human character, and endeavour. He is the embodiment of the intellectual and spiritual glory. Krishṇaism permeates the entire Indian culture and thought. No other single individual or idea has so much influenced the course of India's religion, philosophy, art and literature as the life and personality of Krishṇa. As a child, he was a wonderful child, an object of love to all, as a youth, he was physically most perfect and beautiful (nobody, not even Balarāma or Bhīma or Kichaka or Śalya was as strong as Krishṇa was), his physical charm was beyond a parallel and the only desire Bhīshma had at his death-bed was to see the most beautiful face of Krishṇa. As an intellectual he was the very embodiment of Vedic scholarship and his teachings in the *Gītā* embody the immortal message of desireless action, knowledge and single-minded devotion (Śaṅkara describes the *Gītā* as the quintessence of Vedic knowledge). As a profound Yogī he is called Yogeśvara (which aspect is revealed on many occasions). As a fighter, he was without a rival, as a statesman, most shrewd, as a social thinker, very liberal, as a teacher, the most eloquent, as a friend, never-failing, and as a householder, the most ideal. The cordial reception Sudāmā (a poor Brāhmaṇa and classmate of Krishṇa) received speaks of Krishṇa's sincerest love of his friends. As an ally of the Pāṇḍavas, he stood by them all through in the days of their adversity. It is through his help and wise counsel they could win the terrible *Mahābhārata* war. They have acknowledged his help and greatness again and again. At the time of the Aśvamedha sacrifice Yudhishṭhira, out of gratiude, went to the extent of saying that Krishṇa, rather than he (Yudhishṭhira) should be initiated to the sacrifice. The terrific nature of the Bhārata battle is indicated in the

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following verses:

Bhīshma Droṇa-taṭā Jayadratha-jalā
Gāndhāranīlotpalā
Śalya-grāhavatī Kripeṇa vahanī
Karṇena velākulā
Aśvatthāma-Vikarṇa-ghora-makara
Duryodhanavartanī
Sottīrṇā khalu Pāṇḍavaiḥ raṇanadī
Kaivartakaḥ Keśavaḥ

"The battle-river with Bhīshma and Droṇa as its bank, and Jayadratha as the water and the king of Gandhāra (Śakuni) as the blue water-lilly and Śalya as the shark, with Kripa as the current and Karṇa as the breakers, with Aśvatthāmā and Vikarṇa as the terrible makaras (crocodiles) and Duryodhana as the whirlpool in it was indeed crossed over by the Pāṇḍavas with Keśava as the ferryman" (Svāmī Praṇavānanda, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, 1967, p. viii).

As a householder Krishṇa followed the established code of life most scrupulously. As Paramātman he had no duties to perform, but he adhered to social rules and duties to set an example to others. Though his life was beset with many difficulties, he was free from fear and taught others to be fearless. At the commencement of the Bhārata battle he exhorted Arjuna to shed all attachment and fear and fight for a right cause. He never gave way to grief and lamentations. He was an upholder of social justice. He fought against Naraka not only to get back Aditi's ear-rings but also to release about 16,000 ladies who were wrongfully kept in captivity by the demon. He did not stop there, and considering the sad plight of these ladies, he married them and conferred a social status on them.

Krishṇa's strength and valour, knowledge and wisdom placed him above others. In his presence, everybody paled into insignificance. Everybody was eager to hear what he said. He was the master of all situations; whether in war, or statecraft or peace he was supreme. Even those who did not belong to his school of thought (for example, Duryodhana, Jarāsandha, Dantavaktra, Śiśupāla and Śālva) feared him and respected him, though openly reviling him at times. All the great men of his times, Vyāsa, Bhīshma, Vidura, Yudhishṭhira and Arjuna bowed down their heads in reverence to him. As he was the greatest of all, he received the *agra-pūjā* at the Rājasūya sacrifice.

Indian tradition regards him as the greatest of the Yogīs. Even in Rāsalīlā, he is called a yogī. Because he was a yogī having passions perfectly under his control, he could revive Parīkshit into life when he was born dead. His Vrindavana-līlā with the Gopīs may be treated either as his childhood pranks or symbolic of the yearning of the individual souls for union with the supreme Lord (Paramātman) as he (Krishṇa) was looked upon.

Though Krishṇa was the best of the heroes, having the highest physical strength and intelligence, he was averse to war. If all his life he had to fight and recourse to killing, he did so to punish the wicked and reward the honest. Even when his own kinsmen indulged in internecine war and killed each other, he did not stop it as they fell from the path of virtue and good conduct. It is to put down lawlessness and establish righteousness that he killed Kamsa, Śiśupāla, Śālva, Naraka, Dantavaktra and many others. For that very reason, he was instrumental in causing the destruction of Jarāsandha, Jayadratha, Karṇa and Duryodhana. He was above temporal gains or ambitions. In him was the manifestation of the over-soul "for the advancement of civilising conventions and customs, the institution of law and order, the establishment of an old law and order, or it may be the new establishment of a new law and order for fostering the good...." (Bhagavan Das, *A Study in the Theory of Avatāras*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1962, p. 13).

In all his acts, breathed the same principle of fighting the evil and fostering the good. The *Bhāgavata* (X. Chs.14. 20) says, "O Birthless, Lord of all, thy births among the gods, the Rishis, men, animals, other forms are all intended for one purpose of punishing the wicked and fostering the good."

The love and adoration of Krishṇa had sunk deep into the heart and soul of India and the religion that grew round him drew adherents from all walks of life. In this connection Annie Besant eloquently observed:

"Śrī Krishṇa is the God of the household, the God of family life, the God whose manifestations attract in every phase of His Self-revelation. He is human to the very core, born in humanity, as He has said, He acts as a man. As a child, He is a real child, full of playfulness, of fun, of winsome grace. Growing up into boyhood, into manhood, He exercises the same human fascination over the hearts of men, of women, and of children, the God in whose presence there is always joy, the God in whose presence there is continual laughter and music. When we think of Śrī Krishṇa, we seem to hear the ripple of the river, the rustling of the leaves in the forest, the lowing of the kine in the pasture, the laughter of happy children playing round their parents' knees. He is so fundamentally the God who is human in everything, who bends in human sympathy over the cradle of the babe, who sympathises with the play of the youth, who is the friend of the lover, the blesser of the bride-groom and the bride, who smiles on the young mother when her first born lies in her arms—everywhere the God of love and

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of human happiness; what wonder that his winsome grace has fascinated the hearts of men."[1] On the un que personality of Krishna Sister Nivedita says, "The Grand Personality that towers over Kurukshetra and enunciates the body of doctrine which all India knew...to be the core of Dharma, combines in himself the divinity of the Indian Śiva, the virility of the Greek Heracles, the simplicity of the Judean Christ, the tenderness of Buddha, the calm austerity and learning of any teacher of the Upanishads."[2]

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee made a critical analysis of Krishna's character in his book 'Krishna Charitra' and he came to the opinion that Krishna's dalliances with the Gopīs, as narrated in the *Bhāgavata* and some of the other *Purāṇas*, have no foundation in truth. These are later growths and basically not associated with the original character of Krishna. He observed,[3] "Krishna will stand out as the resplendent embodiment of all good qualities in all places and at all times. He is unconquerable, unconquered, pure, saintly, cheerful, merciful, unflagging in the fulfilment of undertakings, religions, well-versed in all the *Vedas*, rules of conduct, and the injunctions of religion, philanthropic, just, forgiving, impartial, stern as a ruler, free from worldly attachment, selfless, self-controlled and austere" (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, p. 263).

Though divinity has been attributed to Krishna, there are no valid reasons to believe that he was not a human figure. He performed all the duties with human qualities. He has nowhere emphasised the importance of divine intervention or miracles. Self-effort (though desireless effort) has been the key-note of his life. There is no reason to agree with those scholars who hold that Krishna was Vishnu anthropomorphised (Siddhanta, *Heroic Age in India*, London, 1929, p. 104). On the other hand, the absorption of Krishna-element in the Vishnu cult added strength to Vaishnavism. Krishna himself was a householder and he faced many calamities and challenges and he fought out his way. He did not help the Pāṇḍavas by exercising any divine powers. He was just like any other king though possessed of superhuman power, and a contemporary of Dhritarāshtra, Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, Śālva, Duryodhana, etc. whose historicity cannot be doubted. Epic-Purāṇic, Bauddha and Jaina traditions agree to the historical existence of Krishna-Vāsudeva and Balarāma.

The incidents of Krishna's life are scattered in various texts of which the *Harivaṁśa*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata* are the most important so far as the Brahmanical literature is concerned. The other writers, like Bhāsa, Kālidāsa and others have drawn upon these sources, though introducing innovations here and there to add to dramatic charms. The *Mahābhārata* compiled between the 5th century B. C. and the 4th century A. D., contains the later life of Krishna (please see Chapter III of the book). The *Mahābhārata* not only describes Krishna's friendship with the Pāṇḍavas, and the help he rendered to them, leading them to their victory, but the extinction of the Yādavas and Andhakas as a result of the curse of Gāndhārī, Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva and Nārada (*Mahābhārata, Maushala Parva*). It is said that after witnessing the extermination of his kinsmen, Krishna returned to a forest where he was killed by a hunter called Jarā. This story is also told in the Jaina *Antagaḍadasāo* as a prophecy of Arishtanemi, the twenty-third Jaina Tīrthaṅkara, who was a cousin and contemporary of Krishna-Vāsudeva (both of them belonged to the same family). This episode is mentioned also in the Buddhist Ghaṭa and Kumbha Jātakas, though in some modified form (R. P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, Part I, pp. 103 and 104).

Except a few stray incidents of Krishna's boyhood, the early life of Krishna is not mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. It is said that even after compiling an encyclopaedic work like the *Mahābhārata*, Vyāsa was not mentally happy. Nārada explained the reason saying that he had not narrated the early life of Krishna which is so full of charm. And Vyāsa composed the *Harivaṁśa* and several *Purāṇas* to describe the early exploits of Krishna and obtained mental happiness.

The *Purāṇas* that are important for the study of Krishna's life are the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, the *Śrimadbhāgavata Purāṇa*, the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa*, the *Padma Purāṇa*, the *Brahma Purāṇa* and the *Agni Purāṇa*. In several other Purāṇas, such as the *Garuḍa, Kūrma, Vāyu, Nārada* and *Devibhāgavata*, etc., Krishna's story is incidentally dealt with (*Purāṇa*, Vol. XI, No. 1, 1969, pp. 160 ff). The historical kernel that emerges from the above sources divide Krishna's life into three major parts or stages. He was born in the Vrishni family of Mathura. His father was Vasudeva and mother Devakī. Vasudeva had another son called Balarāma, through Rohiṇī. Out of fear from Kamsa Vasudeva sent Balarāma (who was older than Krishna) and his mother to reside incognito in Gokula. For the same reason Krishna also was transferred from Mathura to Gokula (please see Ch. II). He spent the first stage of his life in the beautiful surroundings of Gokula and Vrindavana. The second stage of his life begins with the slaying of Kamsa which is an important event. It brought him into conflict with Jarāsandha and his supporters, like Śiśupāla, Dantavaktra, Śālva and many others whose atrocities afflicted the earth. Out of fear from Jarāsandha, Krishna and Balarāma had to leave Mathura and settle in Dvārakā. In the

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course of time Krishṇa married eight wives, who, except Jāmbavati, were daughters of Kshatriya princes. The life at Dvārakā also was not free from trouble and he protected the city against the attack of Śālva and many other adversaries. He was instrumental in breaking Jarāsandha's confederacy and paved the way for Yudhishṭhira to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. He also killed Śiśupāla who openly reviled at him at the Rājasūya sacrifice (fig. 233). Since then, he had been the constant friend and guide of the Pāṇḍavas. As already mentioned, it is through Krishṇa's help and aid that the Pāṇḍavas could win the Bhārata war. After the completion of the Bhārata war, Krishṇa returned to Dvārakā, though he again came to attend the Aśvamedha sacrifice of Yudhishṭhira. Thereafter took place the extermination of the Vrishṇis and Andhakas and Krishṇa's departure for the heavenly abode which has already been referred to above.

The death of Jarāsandha is a significant event and it is considered to be one of the important achievements of Krishṇa's life. Jarāsandha wanted to be a paramount ruler of India. Dantavaktra, the Yavana king (probably Kālayavana) and Bhagadatta were his subordinates and allies. Yudhishṭhira's maternal uncle, Purujit and Krishṇa's father-in-law, Bhīshmaka also acknowledged Jarāsandha's influence. If we believe in the tradition recorded in the Jaina *Harivaṁśa*, he demanded homage also from Krishṇa, to which the latter refused. While the *Mahābhārata* says that Bhīma, as advised by Krishṇa, killed Jarāsandha, the Jaina *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa* says that Krishṇa himself killed Jarāsandha and removed the greatest adversary of his and of the Pāṇḍavas (B. B. Majumdar, *Krishṇa in Legend and History*, University of Calcutta, 1969, p. 110).

One by one Krishṇa liquidated his political enemies including Mura and Naraka of the Eastern frontier, Śiśupāla, Śālva, Dantavaktra, Pauṇḍraka-Vāsudeva, Kāśirāja and Dvivida and many others (B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 132 and 133). The third stage of his career is his association with the Pāṇḍavas and the role he played in the *Mahābhārata* war. The Belava inscription (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XII, p. 37) describes Krishṇa as the leading figure of the *Mahābhārata*. Not only he told the Pāṇḍavas how to kill Bhīshma, Droṇa, Jayadratha, Karṇa, Bhūrīśravā and Duryodhana but he saved Arjuna also from Bhagadatta's arrows. He revived Parīkshit to life. The *Mahābhārata* in addition to the *Bhagavadgītā*, through various episodes, brings out Krishṇa's greatness, his godly wisdom, love of truth, and above all his sense of duty and his great character free from lust, anger and hatred. The *Anuśāsana Parva* narrates Durvāsa's story in Dvārakā and how Krishṇa tolerated all his eccentricites. The sage yoked Rukmiṇī to his chariot and made her drive it along the high road. The other Dāśārhas became angry, but Krishṇa did not protest against the whims of the sage who was his guest. This shows that Krishṇa completely subdued his anger. He behaved as he preached. Further, he was a great respecter of Brāhmaṇas.

All these facts would show beyond doubt that Krishṇa was a historical person. If any myths grew round him it is because of the superhuman qualities he possessed. Krishṇa's death was equally epoch-making. The *Bhāgavata*, (XII. Chs. 26-32) states: "When the splendour of Vishṇu named Krishṇa departed for heaven, then did the Kalī Age during which men delight in sin, invade the world. So long as he continued to touch the earth with his holy feet, the Kali age was unable to subdue the world."

There are several Rishis bearing the name Krishṇa in the Vedic literature (*Vedic Index*, I, pp. 184 ff). "The identity of the Krishṇa of the *Rigveda* with the epic Krishṇa receives no support from *Purāṇic* tradition, as he is nowhere mentioned as a seer of the Vedic hymns or is in no way connected with the Āṅgirasa" (Pusalkar, *Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas of India*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1955, p. 56). Bankim Chandra in his *Krishṇa Charitra* (*Bankima Rachanāvalī*, 2nd part, Sahitya Samsad, Calcutta, pp. 422 ff) has collected useful references to various Krishṇas mentioned in the Vedic literature.

The *Rigveda* mentions various *Krishṇas*. But it is difficult to ascertain their identity, and equate them with Vāsudeva-Krishṇa of the *Epic* and the *Purāṇas*. Some chief by the name of Krishṇa is mentioned in the *Rigveda*, VIII. 96, 13-15. This Krishṇa encamped on the banks of Amśumatī with 10,000 soldiers and Indra ordered the Maruts as follows: "I have seen Krishṇa swiftly moving on the uneven bank of Amśumatī, like a cloud touching the water, heroes, I send ye forth. Go and fight the battle." Though the *Purāṇas* speak of hostilities between Indra and Krishṇa (please refer to the Giri-Govardhana and Pārijāta-haraṇa episodes) there is not sufficient ground to identify this Krishṇa with Krishṇa-Vāsudeva, the subject of our discussion. Again the composer of the *Rigveda*, VIII. 85-87 and X. 42-44 is also a sage called Krishṇa. The Vedic knowledge of Krishṇa has been extolled both in the *Mahābhārata* and several *Purāṇas* (though he has never been referred to in these texts as a Vedic seer or composer of any Vedic hymns). But on this ground it may not be far-fetched to suggest that this Krishṇa may be the same as the Epic-Purāṇic Krishṇa.

Some scholars are of the opinion that there were two or more traditional Krishṇas, who were later on merged into one deity

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(Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I. p. 546). The *Dīgha-Nikāya* mentions one Kaṇha (phonetically equivalent to Krishṇa) who was a great sage. He may be the same as the Rishi Krishṇa of the eighth Maṇḍala of the *Rigveda* with whom we have suggested the identification of the Epic Krishṇa. Again, it may be mentioned that the *Purusha Sūkta* (*Rigveda* X. 90) was composed by Nārāyaṇa. Krishṇa is also known as Nārāyaṇa. On this basis, some scholars think that the composer of the *Purusha Sūkta* was Krishṇa himself. The 10th and 11th chapters of the *Gītā* are a grand elaboration of the ideas of this *Sūkta*. All this would not only suggest the great Vedic knowledge on the part of Krishṇa but the possibility of his being the composer of certain Vedic hymns.

Before we proceed we may refer to one Krishṇa described in the *Atharvaveda*, as the destroyer of Keśī (Bankim Chandra, *op. cit.*, p. 423). The *Purāṇas* also mention Krishṇa as having killed the demon Keśī. As such one may feel inclined to identify this Krishṇa with the Epic Krishṇa.

Pāṇini's *Ashṭādhyāyī* does not know any Krishṇa, but mentions Vāsudeva (Krishṇa was known also as Vāsudeva because he was a son of Vasudeva). Anyhow the earliest clear reference to Krishṇa-Vāsudeva seems to occur in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*. This *Upanishad* states that Krishṇa *Devakīputra* received instruction from Ghora Āṅgirasa. Krishṇa's mother was Devakī; so there is no doubt that Krishṇa Devakīputra of the *Upanishad* is the same as the Krishṇa of the Epic-Purāṇic tradition. The *Kaushītakī Brāhmaṇa* (30.60) describes Ghora Āṅgirasa as a priest of the sun. The *Chhāndogya* gives an account of the doctrines which he taught his disciple. "In the opinion of the Rishi the Purusha(man) may be compared to a *yajña* (sacrifice). When the man is hungry, thirsty, and enjoys no pleasure his condition corresponds to the *dīkshā* or initiation, when the performer of a sacrifice has to fast and abstain from all worldly pleasure. When he eats, drinks and enjoys himself, his condition corresponds to the *upasada* when sacrificer breaks the fast and takes food. When he laughs, feels and indulges in pleasure his state corresponds to the *stutaśāstra*, when there are music, singing of hymns and recitation of sacred books. Penance, almsgiving, straightforwardness, harmlessness and truthfulness constitute the fee."

Having thus explained the subject (*Purusha-Yajña Vidyā*) to Krishṇa, the son of Devakī, the Rishi added: "Let him when his end approaches meditate on these three: 'O thou art the Imperishable! Thou art the unchangeable (or unfailing). Thou art the true essence of life." Hearing this Krishṇa is said to have lost all thirst for knowledge (H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Materials for the Study of the Early History of Vaishnava Sect*, Calcutta University, 1936, pp. 79 ff). This passage represents the human life as a sort of sacrifice.

Similar ideas occur also in the *Bhagavadgītā*. On the basis of the similarity of the name as well as of philosophical thoughts in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* and the *Gītā* one can presume that the Krishṇa-Devakīputra of the *Upanishad* and his namesake of the *Epic* and *Purāṇas* are one and the same person.

Though Krishṇa's historicity has been accepted, there is a good deal of controversy regarding the age or period when he flourished. There are different traditions regarding the date of the Bhārata war in which Krishṇa took a leading part. The date of the Bhārata war synchronised with the birth of Parīkshit. It is stated in the Aihole inscription of Pulakeśin II that it was composed , when Śaka 556 expired (=A.D. 634-635) and at that time 3735 years passed since the Bhārata war. The date of the Bhārata war according to this calculation (and also on the testimony of Āryabhaṭa, A.D. 499) is 3102 B.C. which is the starting point of the astronomical Kali era. But this view is not supported by other evidence. According to P. C. Sengupta, the Bhārata war took place in 2449 B.C. This view also is usually not acceptable. Pargiter held that the Bhārata war was fought about 950 B.C. and according to Raychaudhuri this event tookplace in about 850 B.C. But the Paurāṇic evidence would, however, place the Bhārata war in c. 1400 B.C. (B.B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 7 ff).

It is stated in the *Matsya Purāṇa* that the coronation of Mahāpadma Nanda came about 1050 years after the birth of Parīkshit. The *Vāyu* and the *Brahmāṇda Purāṇas* also contain similar statements. If it is accepted as some scholars have suggested that Mahāpadma Nanda ascended the throne in 343 B.C., then it can be presumed that the Bhārata war took place in about 1400 B.C. (B.B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 8). This date seems to be plausible from all points of view.

It has not been possible to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion regarding the date of the Bhārata battle from astronomical data contained in the *Mahābhārata*. Such studies have yielded varying dates within the range from 3140 B. C. to 1151 B. C. (Pusalkar, *Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series, 1955, p. 75). Pusalkar says that "after considering the problem from all aspects and different reckonings it seems reasonable to conclude that the Bhārata war took place about 1400 B.C. It is not known how old Krishṇa was at the time of the Bhārata battle. S. B. Roy after considering all evidence places the limits of possible dates as to the age of Krishṇa as follows:

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1761, (1482, 1424, 1280), 1088) B.C., where

1. (1716-1088) B.C. represents the outer limits
2. (1482-1280) B.C. represents the inner limits
3. The most probable date is 1424 B.C. (S.B. Roy, *Date of Mahābhārata Battle*, New Delhi, pp. 148 ff).

The *Bhagavadgītā* is the greatest contribution of Krishṇa to Indian culture. There is nothing improbable in the teaching of the *Gītā*. Whoever might have compiled the *Gītā*, there is no doubt that it contains Krishṇa's message. The *Gītā* laid the foundation of the Bhāgavata cult and the modern Vaishṇavism. Krishṇa reformed the old Bhāgavata or Sāttvata cult and became a rallying centre of a movement in which he was the chief object of worship. In the *Gītā*, without displacing the old methods of Moksha through Karma and Jñana he advocates *bhakti* (the passionate love of god and complete surrender to the will of god) as the easiest way of salvation. The most striking thing in the *Gītā* is that God is not indifferent to human difficulties but he comes down on earth in every age to destroy the wicked and establish righteousness.

In the *Gītā* and other parts of the *Mahābhārata* Krishṇa is treated both as a god and man. In his divine character he has all the attributes of a full-fledged personal monotheistic deity with love and friendliness towards his devotee and at the same time attributes of the Upanishadic Brahman. He is one who is all-pervading and all-inclusive, the unmanifest and at the same time the supreme creator. He is Vishṇu, Vāsudeva, Brahman, Ātman and Purushottama. He combines in himself the supreme Brahman of the Upanishad, a popular god Vāsudeva, and Vishṇu, the highest deity of the Brahmanical theology.

Krishṇa became the centre and pioneer of the thestic Bhakti movement which has exercised the profoundest influence on the religious history of India. He embodies the synthesis of the higher and popular spheres of thought. On the one hand he is the supreme Brahman of the Yogīs and on the other, the object of the devotion of the Gopīs, the simple village girls, who considered him as thier sole resort and to attain whom they abandoned their social ties and bashfulness. His love for the Gopīs was so great that it is said that he (Krishṇa) always sports in Vrindavana in the company of the Gopīs.

The Upanishadic philosophy was too speculative to appeal to any but a small fraction of people. The great mass of mankind demanded a personal god to whom one can appeal for help in times of distress. We have reasons to believe that the demand was met through Krishṇa, a living personality of godhead. He came down to earth to extend his grace and love to his devotees, to save the righteous and punish the wicked, to remove the evils and establish righteousness. "For whensoever right declines and wrong uprises, then I create myself. To guard the good and destory the wicked and to confirm the right I come into being in this age and that." The god of the *Gītā* is the embodiment of love and mercy. Krishṇa says, "Taking refuge in me, though ever performing all acts, by my grace, a man wins to the realm eternal and immutable. Fixing the thought on me thou shalt surmount all difficulties." After the mystic revelation of his true form to Arjuna, Krishṇa says that such a revelation can come only through devoted loves. 'But by devotion undivided, Arjuna, insuch a form can I be known and truly seen, and entered, (*Gītā*, XI. 54). The *Bhagavadgītā* sets an avatāra or incarnation who appears on earth to extend his grace and love to his devotees.

"The manifestation by way of Descent (avatāra) attains its perfection in Krishṇa. The other Avatāras dispel the ignorance of the fallen Jīva (individual) and arouse in him in varying degrees the desire to worship Godhead with awe and reverence. Krishṇa who is the source of all avatāras, reserves to himself the right of bestowing love for Godhead. This constitutes the supreme excellence of the activities of Krishṇa when they appeared in this world. In no avatāra except in small measure in those of Narasimha and Rāmachandra is to be found the extreme deliciousness of the relationship of jīva with Godhead characterised by confidence and intimacy, that attain to freedom in the case of the Brajagopīs that is to be found in the Krishṇa leelā. Therefore, the mercy of godhead reaches its climax in Krishṇa, who appears before the bound-jīva in the most intimate relationship free from all reservation. The mercy of Krishṇa inasmuch as He happens to be Godhead Himself is thus superior to that of all avataras. This fact is at the root of the broad difference that constitutes the dividing line between the various religions" (N. K. Sanyal, *Sree Krishṇa Chaitanya*, Vol. I, Madras, 1933, p. 211).

We know very little about the religion originally preached by Krishṇa. All that we can say is that the religion was strongly monotheistic, the object of worship being Bhagavat, the adorable one. It taught *bhakti* or the single-minded devotion to the supreme deity as the best means of salvation. Krishṇa was gradually deified and identified with Bhagavat and his cult spread to different parts of India. Its success was overwhelming inasmuch as its cult-god (Krishṇa-Vāsudeva)[4] came to be recognised as Vishṇu, and Nārāyaṇa of the Brahmanical theology (Garbe, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1905, pp. 385 and 386, *Indian Antiquary*, 1908, pp. 251 ff).

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Bhāgavatism exercised a profound influence in the domain of Indian religious thought. When Brahmanism was confronted with the dissenting movements of Buddha and Mahāvīra, and when it was found that the abstract and impersonal absolute was more that the mind of the average people could grasp, Bhāgavatism offered a personal god in Krishṇa, a god of grace and love. It is true that the belief in the saving grace of god is found in the *Upanishads*, like the *Kaṭha*, the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Muṇḍaka*, but in the epics, it is asserted that the god whose grace saves is Krishṇa. The grace of man god Krishṇa alone is the saving way (Hopkins, the *Great Epic of India*, New York, 1901, p. 188).

The deification of Krishṇa took place quite early, perhaps in his lifetime. However, the earliest reference to his divinity is to be found in the *Ashṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini (IV.3.98) which used the word 'Vāsudeva' in the sense of a divinity (devatāviśesha) and not as Kshatriya. Patañjali, while commenting on the *Sūtra* rightly raises the question as to why *Vun* is used for Vāsudeva though the affix *Vuñ* comes diversely after the words denoting Gotra and Kshatriya (*Gotrakshatriyākhyebhyo bhaulaṁ Vuñ*. IV. 3.99). He suggested that the *Sūtra* IV. 3.98 has been devised to show the *pūrvanipāta* (i.e. to show that Vāsudeva being more revered should be placed before Arjuna, though the latter begins with a vowel and had also fewer vowels than the words (Vāsudeva) or Vāsudeva here is not the designation of a Kshatriya but a designation of Tatrabhavat or Tatrabhagavat). The interpretation of Patañjali has been accepted by the later grammarians like Jayāditya, Vāmana, Kaiyaṭa and Bhaṭṭoji Dikshit.

Regarding Arjuna of the *Sūtra Vāsudevārjunābhyām Vun*, Pāṇini, IV. 3.98, we know that from the very beginning he was regarded as an incarnation of Nara who is often mentioned in the *Māhābhārata* along with Nārāyaṇa as a double divinity.

The date of Pāṇini is not precisely known to us. Goldstücker placed him in about 8th century B. C. According to the majority of scholars, Pāṇini flourished about 600 B. C. Even if this date is accepted we may conclude that Krishṇa who was also called Vāsudeva was considered as a divinity as early as the 6th century B. C.

The next authentic reference to the worship of Krishṇa-Vāsudeva is the account of Megasthenes, a Greek Ambassador in the court of Chandragupta Maurya (late 4th century B. C.). Megasthenes and Arrian state that Herakles was held in special honour by the Sourasenoi, who possessed two large cities, Methora and Cleisobora. As Bhandarkar (*Vaishṇavism, Śaivism*, etc., p. 3) points out, the Sourasenoi were the same as the Sāttvatas who lived in Śūrasena (Mathura) and Herakles is the Greek hero god closest to the Indian Hero God Krishṇa-Vāsudeva. Methora and Cleisobora stand for Mathura and Krishṇapura (equivalent to Vrindavana, Vraja, etc. (P. Banerjee, *Early Indian Religions*, Delhi, 1973, p. 68).

While the *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (3rd century B. C.) which mentions various religious sects, such as the Ājīvikas, the Niganṭhas, the Muṇḍasāvakas, the Jaṭilakas, the Paribbājakas, the Gotamakas, the Devadhammikas, and several others, does not include the Bhāgavatas, there is a solitary reference to the Vāsudeva-vāṭikā and Baldeva-vāṭikā (signifying the shrines of Vāsudeva and Baladeva) in a passage found in the *Chulla Niddesa* and *Mahā Niddesa* (H. C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

The second century B. C. witnessed an enormous popularity of the Bhāgavata cult (it should be remembered that in its early phases, the worship of Balarāma and Krishṇa seems to have been of equal importance, though subsequently as the *Vyūha* system developed Balarāma worship became subsidiary). The epigraphical records of this period would also show that there took place a complete amalgamation of the Bhāgavata, Vishṇu and Nārāyaṇa cults.

During this time, the centre of Bhāgavatism seems to have shifted from Mathura to Central India. But this may not be a real shifting, for in Krishṇa's time, the Vrishṇis and the other Yādavas attached to Vaishṇavism occupied the whole region from the Yamunā valley to Saurāshṭra, including Central India, Malwa, Rajaputana, Gujarat and Kathiawad.

The most important Bhāgavata record of the period is the inscribed Garuḍa column from Besnagar, which was erected in honour of the Śuṅga King, Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra, (*Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1912-13, pp. 82 ff). The inscription on the column describes Vāsudeva as *devadeva* i.e. the god of gods. This column (fig. 5) was orginally surmounted by Garuḍa, vehicle of Vishṇu. As Vāsudeva as God and man came to signify Krishṇa, the dedication of the *Guruḍa-dhvaja* to him proves beyond doubt that the amalgamation of Vishṇu and Krishṇa cults was an established fact by the 2nd century B. C. This is evident also from Patañjali's *Mahābhāshya*. The great commentator who flourished during this period notices under Paṇini that the musical instruments were played in the temple of Dhanapati, Rāma and Keśava. In the *Baudhāyana Dharma-Sūtra* Keśava is an epithet of Vishṇu. This would show that in Patañjali's time Krishṇa-Vāsudeva came to be regarded as indentical

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with Vishṇu. As already stated, Patañjali considers the Vāsudeva of Pāṇini *Sūtra*, IV. 3. 98, as a divinity and not as a Kshatriya. The epic describes several incarnations of Vishṇu and Krishṇa-Vāsudeva is one of them. It is as Krishṇa-Vāsudeva and Nārāyaṇa that Vishṇu commands the highest respect. Vishṇuism becomes infused with a new life only when it is identified with the Krishṇa cult. Though Vishṇu maintains a separate existence from Krishṇa, the most interesting feature is his transformation into the supreme god as Krishṇa-Vāsudeva.

While Vishṇu is a Rigvedic deity, Nārāyaṇa is just mentioned in the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XII. 3.4) calls him Purusha Nārāyaṇa. In the same text it is stated that Nārāyaṇa to surpass all things performed a Pāñcharātra sacrifice and became supreme and omnipresent. In the *Śānti Parva* Nārāyaṇa is described identified with Vishṇu and Vāsudeva. It is interesting to note that in the fourth *Prapāṭhaka* of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* mention is made of Nārāyaṇa in connection with Vishṇu and Vāsudeva apparently as three phases of the same supreme spirit: Nārāyaṇāya vidmahe, Vāsudevāya dhīmahi, tanno Vishṇu prachodayāt.

One of the main features of the Bhāgavata or Pāñcharātra cult is the worship of the *Vyūhas*. The *Vyūha* doctrine is taught in detail in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the *Mahābhārata*. It is difficult to set forth the doctrine in detail. The *Vyūha* doctrine regards Vāsudeva who is Nārāyaṇa and Vishṇu as identical with Purusha, Paramātman, Iśvara and Kshetrajña. (For a detailed treatment of the subject, see *Indian Historical quarterly*, Vol. VIII, No. 1. pp. 64 ff). That Being divides himself and becomes four. From Vāsudeva sprang Saṅkarshaṇa, from Saṅkarshaṇa emanated Pradyumna and from Pradyumna Aniruddha. While Vāsudeva is the highest self, Saṅkarshaṇa is identified with *Jīva* (living soul), Pradyumna with *manas* (intelligence) and Aniruddha with *ahaṅkāra* (egotism or consciousness).That the cult developed in the second century B. C. is evident also from the *Brahmasūtra*. (ii. 42-45).

The Ghoshuṇḍi Hathibada inscription (c. 2nd century B. C.) seems to contain the germ of the *Vyūha* doctrine. It records the erection of a pūjā-śilā-prākāra, i.e. a stone enclosure for Bhagavat (divine) Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva at the Nārāyaṇa-vāṭikā (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVI, p. 27, XVII, pp. 189 ff). Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva are described in the inscription as *anihata*, unconquered and *sarveśvara* (the supreme lord). Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva are invoked together along with the Vedic gods such as Dharma, Indra and the four lokapālas, Yama, Kuvera, Varuṇa and Vāsava (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. X, *Lüder's List*, Appendix).

While we recognise two of the *Vyūhas*, namely Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva in the Ghosuṇḍi and Nānāghāt inscriptions, it is interesting to note that both the inscriptions mention Saṅkarshaṇa first and Vāsudeva second though according to the *Vyūha* doctrine Vāsudeva is the highest self and Saṅkarshaṇa is an emanation from him. Historically, Saṅkarshaṇa is the elder brother of Krishṇa and initially he had an independent cultus and an equal position as that of Vāsudeva. The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya also speaks of a religious order devoted to Saṅkarshaṇa: "Spies disguised as ascetics with shaved head or braided hair and pretending to be the worshippers of god Saṅkarshaṇa may mix their sacrificial beverage with the juice of Madana plant (and give to the cowherds) and carry off the cattle (Shamsastry's English translations, p. 485). The present two inscriptions record the old traditon of the equal status of both Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva. In this connection it may be stated that the iconographic representations of Balarāma are older than those of Krishṇa (cf. the Balarāma figure from Mathura, (fig. 4), ascribable to the 2nd century B. C.). But gradually, the Saṅkarshaṇa cult receded into the background and the Krishṇa cult gained more importance. The Bhāgavata inscription on the Besnagar Pillar (fig. 5) mentions only Vāsudeva as *devadeva* and not Saṅkarshaṇa.

In Besnagar were found capitals of two columns, shaped as *tāla* (fan-palm) and *makara* (crocodile). It appears that these two columns were dedicated to Saṅkarshaṇa and Pradyumna, two *Vyūhas* of the Bhāgavata or Pāñcharātra cult (J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta University, 1956, p. 104). As these capitals are ascribable to the 2nd century B. C., it can be asserted that the *Vyūha* worship existed in its full-fledged form during this period. This is supported by Patañjali in his *Mahābhāshya*. Patañjali mentions not only Rāma and Keśava but also Janārdana with himself as the fourth (Janārdanastvātma chaturtha eva), which probably indicates the four *mūrtis* of Vāsudeva or Nārāyaṇa, i.e. the *Vyūhas*: Vāsudeva, Saṅkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha (P. Banerjee, *Early Indian Religions*, Delhi, 1973, p. 92). The divinity of Krishṇa is mentioned also in certain Buddhist texts. The Avadāna, No. 7 mentions that one Tīrthika procured at a high price certain flowers to worship Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. Again, in Avadāna No. 23, it is mentioned that a young wife of a merchant of Rajagriha prayed to Nārāyaṇa for the safe return of her husband who was abroad, and when her husband returned she made a golden wheel and worshipped at the temple of Nārāyaṇa (*Avadāna Śataka*, Vol. 1, p. 37 and p. 129). The *Avadāna Śataka* was written during the early centuries of the Christian era.

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The two very famous authors of the Sanskrit literature, namely Bhāsa (c. 3rd century) and Kālidāsa (c. 4th century) also refer to the divinity of Krishṇa. In the *Bālacharita*, Vasudeva speaks of Vishṇu as having been born as his son.

Iha tu jagati nūnam rakshaṇārtham prajānām
asura-samiti-hantā Vīshṇuradyāvatīrnaḥ

It is a well-known fact that Vasudeva took Krishṇa just after his birth to Gokula to save him from Kamsa's wrath and many sculptures show Devakī handing over the child to Vasudeva. This incident of handing over the child to Vasudeva by Devakī is mentioned only in the *Bālacharita* of Bhāsa and not in any *Purāṇas* or other texts. Another interesting feature of the *Bālacharita* is that the dance of Gopīs is mentioned in it not as *Rāsalīlā* but as *Hallisaka*. This is to be found in the Bharata-Nāṭya-Sūtra (B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 70). This term does not occur in *Vishṇu* or *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

Kālidāsa also describes Krishṇa as Vishṇu and some of his exploits. The poet refers to Krishṇa and the Nāga Kāliya in the *Raghuvamśa*, VI. 49. The *Kumārasambhava*, 3.13 contains an allusion to Krishṇa as having been asked by Indra to entrust the mighty Śesha the duty of bearing the weight of his body (S. R. Seghal, Bhāsa's *Bālacharita*, Delhi, 1959, p. 14). The *Meghadūta* describes Krishṇa as Vishṇu in the garb of a cowhered.

Yena śyāmam vapuratitarām
kāntimāpatsyate te
barheṇaiva sphurita-ruchiṇā
gopa-veshasya Vishṇoḥ

The Bhāgavata religion became widespread all over India including the south quite early. The epigraphic records of Mathura would show the popularity of the religion in the region during the Śaka-Kushāṇa rule. The Mora well inscription of the time of Mahākshatrapa Soḍāsa (1st centyry B. C.) speaks of the enshrinement of the images of five heroes (Pañchavīras, who were, as J. N. Banerjea holds, Saṅkarshaṇa, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, Sāmba and Aniruddha, who, except Sāmba, constitute the four *Vyūhas* of the Pāñcharātra cult, J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 93ff.). Again, the new Mathura inscription records the erection by one Vasu of a quadrangle enclosed by four buildings, a gateway and a terrace at the shrine of Bhagavat Vāsudeva, during the reign of the Mahākshatrapa Soḍāsa. One of the most interesting Bhāgavata relics of the Kushāṇa period is the Ekānamśā triad from Gaya, now housed in the Patna Museum, Patna (fig. 3) (*Journal, Bihar Research Society*, Vol. LIV, pp. 229-244).

The early history of Bhāgavatism in Western India is provided by the Nānāghāṭ and Nāsik inscriptions (P. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 and 78). The Sangam literature throws light on the early history of this religion in the south, especially in Tamil Nadu. The subsequent history of this religion both in the north and in the south can be built with the help of extensive literary, archaeological and architectural sources.

The Krishṇa cult underwent a marked change in the medieval period. The early life of Krishṇa spent in the midst of the Gopas and Gopīs in the pleasant surroundings of Vrindavana captured the imagination of the people most. Round his romantic life of Vrindavana developed a Bhakti movement with emotional religious sentiment. The *Purāṇas* and other compositions of this period relegate Krishṇa's human origin into the background and glorify his divine nature. They consider him to be the highest god.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (composed c. 10th century) which describes Krishṇa's exploits in detail brings in a new note of passionate *bhakti* distinct from that of the *Gītā* and that of Rāmānuja. In the *Bhāgavata* the utter self-abandonment of the love of the Gopīs for Krishṇa stands for the highest spiritual devotion. Meditation on Krishṇa's exploits, his charm, and image and dalliance with the Gopīs create a passionate devotional feeling leading to the highest spiritual experience.

The lead given by the *Bhāgavata* was taken by the later writers of the devotional field. In the course of time arose the concept of Rādhā (not mentioned in the *Bhāgavata*). Rādhā became the symbol of the highest devotion to Krishṇa, the yearning of the individual for the universal soul. Many Vaishṇava sects began to regard her (Rādhā) as the Śakti of Krishṇa. Śrī Chaitanya of Bengal elevated the Rādhā-Krishṇa love to the plane of the divine mystic love.[5]

During the 12th-15th centuries, a great deal of Rādhā-Krishṇa literature was written. The *Gīta-Govinda* of Jayadeva (12th century) is the most prominent of them. It is Jayadeva who brings out for the first time the intense and passionate love of Rādhā for Krishṇa. Rādhā was tormented by the pangs of separation and was ever eager to meet Krishṇa. The eleventh Canto describes the reconciliation of the two divine lovers followed by their love sports in the 12th Canto. Later on Chaṇḍidāsā and Vidyāpati produced beautiful Rādhā-Krishṇa lyrics in Bengali and Maithili respectively. In Rajasthan, Mīrābāī, a princess, became a great devotee of Krishṇa. She visited Mathura and spent her last days in Dvārakā singing the glory of the Lord. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu made the Rādhā-Krishṇa cult the basis of his teaching and tells that there is nothing else that can touch the human heart so powerfully.

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The Sangam literature, the songs of the Āḻvārs and of Vilvamaṅgala and the teachings of Vaishṇava Āchāryas like Rāmānuja, Nimbārka and Madhva would show that the Krishṇa cult had a profound influence in the south. The Āḻvārs who flourished mostly before the 9th century were ardent devotees of Krishṇa and their songs are infused with emotional *bhakti* which perhaps paved the way to the creation of a tremendously popular *bhakti* literature like the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Further, the *Mukundamālā* of Kulaśekhara Āḻvār and the *Krishṇakarṇāmrita and Bālagopālastuti* of *Līlāśuka* (Bilvamaṅgala) drew hearts of the people to Krishṇa. The *Krishṇakarṇāmrita* is a passionate eulogy of the beloved deity, Krishṇa.

The Krishṇa *bhakti* was so widespread and deeply rooted in the soil, that even the Vedantists like Śaṅkara (8th century) and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (16th century) were enchanted by it. Śaṅkara's verses on Devī, Śiva and Govinda show the devotional attitude of his mind. Again, it is interesting to note that Śaṅkara invariably connects Krishṇa with Vāsudeva and Vishṇu throughout his commentary on the *Gītā*. Some scholars notice Śaṅkara's influence on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as there is some similarity in the idea as well as the language between the two. There is a book called *Shaṭpadī*, a hymn to Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa which is attributed by some to Śaṅkarāchārya (Dasgupta & De, *History* of *Sanskrit Literature*, University of Calcutta, 1947, p. 661).

The *Ānandamandākinī* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is a highly devotional song in praise of Krishṇa (Dasgupta & De, *op. cit.*, p. 383).

Like Śaṅkara, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (author of the *Advaita Sidddhi*) was a confirmed monist, but his heart overflowed with devotion to Krishṇa. That he followed a path of *bhakti* is apparent from his *Bhagavadgītā-guḍhārtha - dīpikā*, *Bhagavad- bhaktīrasāyana*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa - prathama - śloka-vyākhyā*, *Vedāntastutiṭīkā*, *Śāṇḍilyasūtraṭīkā*., etc. (S. C. Chakravarti, *Philosophical Foundation of Bengal Vaishṇavism*, Calcutta, 1969, pp. 190 and 191). Madhusūdana has identified Krishṇa with the highest reality of the *Vedānta* (*Ibid.*). It is difficult for the Lord to extricate Himself from the snare of the love of His devotee:

hastamutkshipya yāto'si balāt Krishṇa!
kimadbhutam
hridayādyadi niryāsi paurusham
gaṇayāmi te
sakalamidamaham cha Vāsudevaḥ
parama-pumān parameśvara sa ekaḥ.
iti matirachalā bhavatyanante
hridayagate vraja tān vihāya dūrāt

It is, however, the teachings of Rāmānuja, Madhva or Ānanda Tīrtha, Nimbārka and Vallabhāchārya that laid the foundation of the Vaishṇava philosophy and enhanced the popularity of the Krishṇa cult. The poets and devotees, like Bihārī, Keśavadāsa, Sūradāsa and Rahīm (16th century) and many others through their compositions carried the fragrance of Krishṇa-Bhakti to the innermost recess of the people's heart.

Some scholars have noticed some common elements between the legend of Krishṇa and Christ. One of the obvious similarities is the similarity of the names of Krishṇa, sometimes pronounced as Krishṭṇa and Christ. These scholars think that the Indian travellers who went to West learnt about Christianity and on their return home, they transferred the legend of Christ to Krishṇa, who was already worshipped in India as a demi-god. In the second place, some Christians who might have come to India found Indian soil favourable for propagation of the Christian doctrines (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX, 1901, p. 286ff). This theory, though accepted by some scholars, does not seem to be plausible. The Krishṇa story and Bhāgavatism were in full-fledged condition much before the rise of Christianity. Further, there are certain incidents in the life of Krishṇa, which are not to be found in the career of Christ. Again, there was some basic difference in the outlook of the two. Christ was a preacher, but Krishṇa was a man of action.

While a Balarāma image has been found in Mathura which on stylistic grounds can be definitely dated to the 2nd century B. C., no such old image of Krishṇa has so far been found in India. It is, however, interesting to note that some coins of Agathocles (second century B. C.) found in Ai Khanoum, Bactria, contain the representation of Krishṇa and Balarāma (figs. 1 and 2). There is nothing surprising in it as the Krishṇa-Balarāma worship was well established by this time and received the allegiance of some of the foreign rulers also. The Ghoshūṇḍī-Hāthibāḍā inscription (150 B. C.) refers to the erection of a stone enclosure for Bhagavat Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva at the Nārāyaṇa-vāṭikā. But no image of Krishṇa or Balarāma was found here. The Mora Well Inscription from Mathura of the time of Soḍāsa (first century B. C.) records the enshrinement of the images of Pañchavīras, i.e. Krishṇa, Balarāma, Pradyumna, Sāmba and Aniruddha. But the images of this group have also not been found in Mathura. The earliest sculptural representation of Krishṇa is the panel from Mathura which shows Vasudeva carrying the new-born Krishṇa and crossing the river Yamunā to reach Gokula (fig. 22). This relief which is damaged and fragmentary belongs to the Kushāṇa period (2nd century). Ascribable to this period is also the Ekānamśā triad (i.e. Krishṇa, Balarāma and Ekānamśā)

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from Gaya, now housed in the Patna Museum, Patna (fig. 3) (*Journal, Bihar Research Society*, Vol. LIV, pp. 229-244).

The Krishṇa cult attained a great popularity during the reign of the Guptas (4th to 6th century) who were *paramabhāgavatas* (ardent devotees of the Bhāgavata religion in which Krishṇa was held as the chief object of devotion). The artists of this period produced some very beautiful stone reliefs showing scenes from Krishṇa's life. In this connection attention may be drawn to Mandor (Jodhpur) pillars (4th-5th century), containing some exploits of Krishṇa's early life (figs. 9 and 10) as well as to the reliefs from the Daśāvatāra temple, Deogarh (5th century) depicting various subjects including the transfer of Krishṇa to Gokula after his birth, the uprooting of the Yamalārjuna, the upholding of the Giri-Govardhana, etc. Mention should be made here also of the Rang Mahal terracottas (5th century) showing the *dānalīlā* and Giri-Govardhana episodes (figs. 109 and 153). The Barabar Hill Cave Inscription of Anantavarman Maukhari (6th century) records the installation in the cave by the Maukhari Chief of the image of God Vishṇu in his incarnation as Krishṇa (Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, p. 222). The stone relief from Garhwa (6th century) forcefully depicts the fight between Bhīma and Jarāsandha (fig. 228). Bādāmi and Paṭṭaḍakal in Karṇāṭaka were important centres of Vaishṇavism during the 7th century. The caves of Bādāmi contain many scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as the Pūtanā-vadha, *dadhi-manthana*. Giri-Govardhana, Pralamba-vadha, etc. (figs. 11-13). Some of these scenes occur also on certain reliefs from the Viśvanātha Temple, Paṭṭaḍakal (figs. 14 and 15).

The Paharpur temple (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh) contain many panels showing Krishṇa-līlā scenes, including Vasudeva carrying Krishṇa to Gokula, Yamalārjuna-vadha, Pralamba-vadha, Keśi-vadha, etc. (8th century). The Simhanātha temple, Cuttack district, Orissa (c. 7th century), also represents some exploits of Krishṇa's life. Stylistically, they are akin to the Paharpur reliefs.

In the south, the earliest representations of Krishṇa's life include the Giri-Govardhana scene from Mogalarajpuram (Vishṇukuṇḍin period, 6th century) and the Kāliyamardana and Govardhana scenes from Mahābalipuram (7th century). The Vishṇu temple at Nāchiar Koyil (Thañjavur district) and Pārthasārathi temple (Madras) contain the images of the Pañchavīras with Rukmiṇī. The scenes from Krishṇa's life, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the Kailāśa temple at Ellora (eighth century) show the popularity of the Vaishṇava theme in the Deccan.

As the time passed, Vaishṇavism gained in importance and popularity. Both in the medieval and late medieval periods, many Vaishṇava temples were constructed in the north as well as South India. These periods also produced many images in stone and bronze depicting the events of Krishṇa's life.

The songs of the South Indian Āḻvāras, the enchanting theme of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* followed by the devotional compositions of Jayadeva and Līlāśuka, namely the *Gīta-Govinda* and *Krishṇakarṇāmrita* were mainly responsible for popularising the Krishṇa theme throughout the length and breadth of India. The *Gīta-Govinda* was regarded as the *Vaishṇava-Veda* in Gujarat in the time of Śāraṅgadeva of the thirteenth century (*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. X, p. 15). Jayadeva has described the Rādhā-Krishṇa sports in a fascinating manner. The *Gīta-Govinda* has provided a great inspiration to the growth of medieval Vaishṇavism.

The *Bhāgavata* which concentrates on the youthful exploits of Krishṇa and advocates a passionate *bhakti* around Krishṇa is the supreme authority of the Vaishṇavas. The Chaitanya and Vallabha sects have accorded it a high position equal to the well-known *Prasthānatrayī*, namely the *Vedas*, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. "In spite of emotional directness the poem possesses all the distinctive features of a deliberate work of art. The sheer beauty and music of the words and the highly sensuous pictorial effect, authenticated by a deep sincerity of erotic passion, made it a finished product of lyrical imagination." (Dasgupta & De, *op. cit.*, p. 388).

Because of their enormous popularity these three texts were the first Vaishṇavite works to be illustrated by the artists and it is interesting to note that their earliest illustrated versions were produced in Western India. It is quite natural because of the fact that Dvārakā which was Krishṇa's main centre of activities since he left Mathura was very popular with Vaishṇavite saints and laymen. Secondly, Western India developed the art of illustrating the manuscripts quite early.

An illustrated version of the *Gīta-Govinda* and two illustrated versions of the *Bālagopālastuti* were produced in Western India in about 1450 (W.G. Archer, *The Loves of Krishṇa*, London, 1957, p. 94). The Bhāgavata *Daśamaskandha* from Kankroli with one miniature records the transition in style from the three-fourths profile to the strict profile and has been dated by M. R. Majmudar in the late 15th century (*Journal, Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. X, p. 16). Two dated manuscripts of the *Bhāgavata Daśamaskandha*, one in the

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collection of Jaipur Pothīkhānā, Jaipur and the other in the collection of the Maharaja of Jodhpur Pustak Prakash, Jodhpur Fort are dated, respectively, in 1598 and 1610 (W. G. Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

The 16th century is an efflorescence of the Krishṇa cult which was due to the preaching of Chaitanya, Vallabha, Mīrābāī and many other saints. This period saw also the rise of great devotees, writers and poets, like Keśavadās, Bihārīlāla, Sūradāsa and Rahīm. Another factor which helped the spread of the Bhakti cult was the tolerant policy of Akbar (second half of the sixteenth century). Akbar wanted to bring about a rapproachment between the Hindu and Muslim cultures. He respected the Gosvāmis of Mathura and allowed the construction of Krishṇa temples there. He encouraged art and literature and under his patronage came into being the Mughal school of art, which in its turn influenced the Rajasthani and many other indigenous schools of art. He got the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* translated into Persian and illustrated by the famous artists of his court. "The abridgement of the *Mahābhārata* known as the *Razm Nama*, was probably completed in 1588, but illustrated copies, including the great folios now in the palace library at Jaipur were probably not completed before 1595. As a part of the project, its appendix, the *Harivaṁśa* was also summarized and a separate volume with fourteen illustrations, all concerned with Krishṇa, is part of the great version now at Jaipur." (W. G. Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 98).

Following the Mughal court the Rajput and Pahari kings also encouraged artists in their own courts. Thus many schools of art flourished in Rajasthan, the Himalayan region and other parts of India in the 18th and 19th centuries. The paintings produced in these courts show preponderance of the Krishṇa theme.

These paintings not only show him as a godhead, but also a prince and a Nāyaka, the ideal hero, who drew praise and devotion for his many-sided qualities. Keśavadāsa writes in the *Rasikapriyā*.

श्री वृषभानु-कुमारी हेतु शृंगार रुपमय ।
वास दास रस दरे, मात वंदन करुणामय ।।
केशी प्रीत अति रौद्र वीर मार्‌यो वत्सासुर
भव दावानल पान कियो वीभत्स वकी उर ।।
अति अदभुत वंचि विरंचि मति. शांत संतते शोच चित ।
कहि केशव सेवहु रसिक जन नवरसमय व्रजराज नित ।।

"Keśavadāsa says that all aesthetically inclined people should serve Śrī Krishṇa, who was beloved of Rādhā, who produced laughter when he stole the clothes of the Gopīs, who stirred the emotion of sympathy when he was tied as a child by Yaśodā, who appeared in his heroic form while destroying Bakāsura and Pūtanā and who evoked the feeling of surprise at the time of *Vastraharaṇa*."

The Krishṇa cult spread also to Nepal, Viet-Nam, Laos, Cambodia and a few other places in South-East Asia. The Kāliyamardana sculpture from Nepal (fig. 75) and the scenes of Krishṇa's life from Indonesia and Angkor Wat (figs. 16, 28 and 115) are illustrative of the popularity of the Krishṇa theme in these countries since an early time.

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1. Annie Besant's *Discourses on Hindu Avataras*.

2. Sister Nivedita, *Footfalls of Indian History*.

3. *Krishṇa Charitra*, Pt. VII, Ch. 2; N.N. Law, Śrī Krishṇa and Śrī Chaitanya, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, 1947, p. 263.

4. Krishṇa was also called Vāsudeva, as he was the son of the Yādava prince Vasudeva. Saṅkarshaṇa, Krishṇa's elder brother, was, however, never called Vāsudeva. The *Mahābhārata* also takes Vāsudeva to mean the son of Vasudeva. But in certain places, it gives a different etymology of the word. It says: "He is called Vāsudeva in consequence of his enveloping all creatures with the screen of illusion, or of his glorious splendour or of his being the support and resting place of the gods." (H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Materials for the Study of the Early History of the Vaishṇava Sect*, University of Calcutta, 1936, p. 34).

Vasanāt sarvabhūtanām vasutvād-devayonitaḥ
Vāsudevastato vedyo brihatvād Vishṇuruchyate
Mahābhārata, V. 70. 3

On the basis of this, some scholars argue that originally Vāsudeva and Krishṇa were different. Vāsudevism originated earlier and later grew another sect round the figure of Krishṇa. In the course of time, the Vāsudeva of the Vrishṇis and Krishṇa of the Yādavas merged together (R. N. Dandekar, *Vaishṇavism and Saivism*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1976, pp. 35 ff).

This view is not however accepted by many scholars. In this connection Raychaudhuri observes: "It is impossible to accept the statement that Krishṇa whom the epic tradition identifies with Vāsudeva was originally an altogether different individual. On the contrary, all available evidence, Hindu, Buddhist and Greek, points to the correctness of the identity, and we agree with Keith when he says that the separation of Vāsudeva and Krishṇa as two entities it is impossible to justify." (H. C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 36; *Journal, Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1915, p. 840).

5. In the medieval literature of India, Rādhā is inseparably associated with Krishṇa, though her name is not mentioned in the *Harivaṁśa*, the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata*. The Rādhā-Krishṇa cult has provided a great inspiration to the poets and artists. The counterpart of Rādhā in early south Indian literature is Pinnai or Nappinai. The earliest mention of Rādhā is to be found in the *Panchatantra* of Vishṇuśarmā (c. 500) and the *Gāthāsaptasatī* of Hāla (7th century), the *Veṇīsamhāra* of Bhatta Nārāyaṇa (c. 800), the *Dhvanyāloka* of Anandavardhana (c. 860-900), the *Kāvyamīmāmsā* of Rājaśekhara (c. 880-920), etc. (For Detailed reference on the subject, see *P. K. Gode commemoration Volume*, Part III, pp. 88 ff.; B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 ff.). The earliest epigraphic evidence with regard to Rādhā is the Mandor inscription of the 8th-9th century (R. C. Agrawal, *Proceedings*, Indian History congress, 1954, p. 163).

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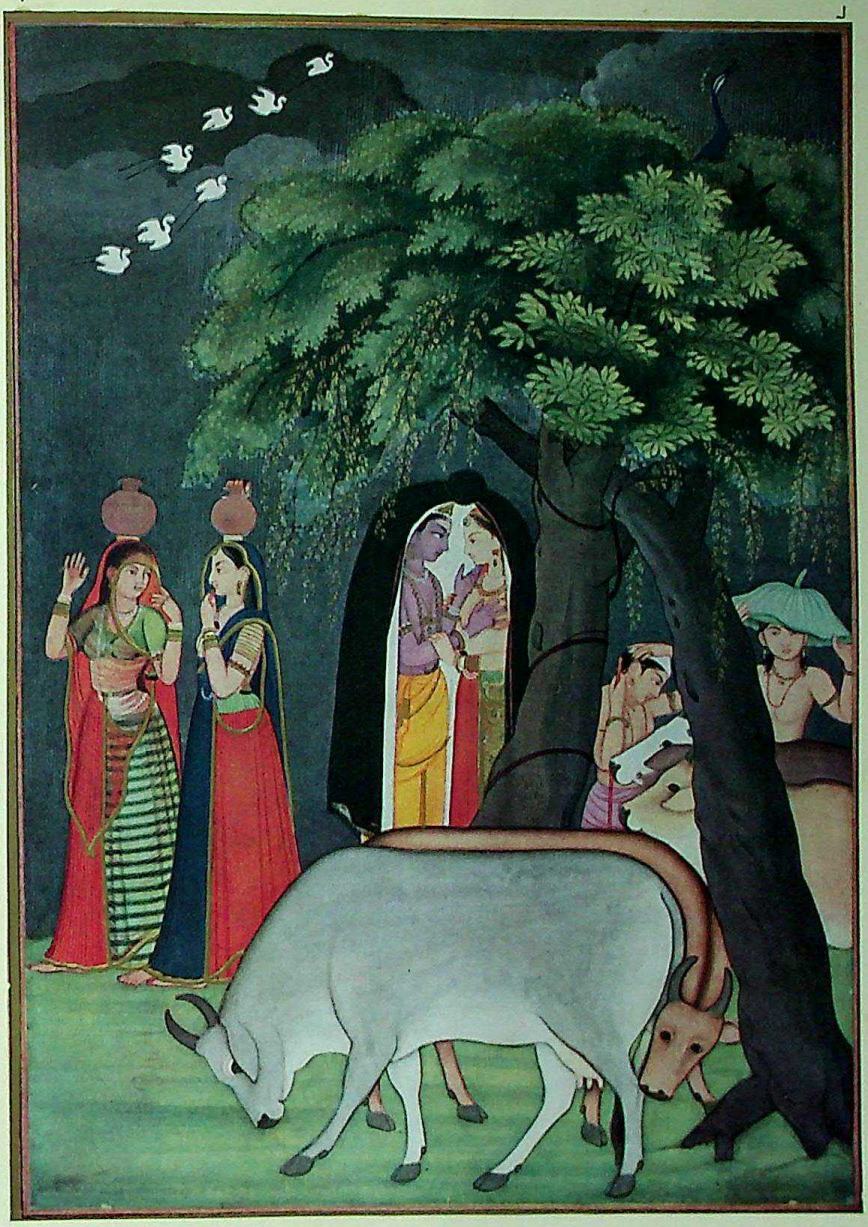

Sheltering from rain, Kangra Style, late 18th century,
Punjab Museum, Patiala.

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The adoration of Vishṇu, Guler Style, 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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EARLY LIFE OF KRISHṆA

THE early life of Krishṇa, as already mentioned, is described chiefly in the *Purāṇas* and the *Harivaṁśa*, supplement to the *Mahābhārata*. Of all the *Purāṇas*, the *Bhāgavata* has attained the greatest popularity because of its elaborate and lucid exposition, chiefly of Krishṇa's life and the artists have followed it more than any other composition, in illustrating the Krishṇa legend. Before we proceed, it may be mentioned that there are a few minor incidents of Krishṇa's life which were popular with the artists, though, however, not mentioned in the *Bhāgavata* or in the *Harivaṁśa*. Such incidents are Krishṇa's crying for the moon (fig.46), the *dāna-līlā* (toll-tax), Krishṇa's sports with the Gopīs on boat, etc. They are mentioned in certain medieval works of which the *Sūrasāgara* of Sūradāsa (sixteenth century) is the most prominent. This would show that the Krishṇa legend was a growing theme and the poets of different ages invented new incidents to popularise the theme and to satisfy the religious emotions of the people.

The main outline of Krishṇa's early life as based on the *Purāṇas* and the *Harivaṁśa* is as follows:

Once the earth was oppressed by the demoniac kings who grew very powerful. Unable to bear the burden of these atrocious kings, the earth-goddess, Bhūmi Devī, went to Brahmā to seek remedies. Brahmā, accompanied by Śiva and other gods went to Milk ocean where Vishṇu was in meditation.[1]

The gods offered prayer to Vishṇu chanting the *Purusha-sūkta*. The Supreme Lord assured Brahmā that to annihilate the demons and to protect the righteous he would soon appear on earth as Krishṇa, and his other portion would appear shortly before him (i.e. Krishṇa) as Balarāma. His external potency, i.e. Vishṇumāyā would also appear to help him to execute his mission.[2]

When the time for the advent of the Supreme Lord as Krishṇa came, the Yādavas lived in Mathura and Ugrasena was their king. He was deposed by his son Kamsa, who was powerful and atrocious. At that time there were many other atrocious kings ruling in different parts of India and the country was groaning under their oppression. It is at this appropriate moment that Krishṇa was born in the Vrishṇi (Yādava) family in Mathura as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva to relieve the world of its burden.

Devakī was the cousin of Kamsa. After her marriage with Vasudeva, Kamsa himself drove the chariot carrying the newly married couple on their journey to their own city. On the way, Kamsa heard an incorporeal voice that he would be killed by the eighth child of Devakī. Kamsa at once wanted to kill Devakī. But Vasudeva saved her life by giving the promise that whenever a son would be born, he would hand him over to Kamsa. Kamsa killed the first six sons of Devakī and Vasudeva. When the seventh son, an incarnation of Vishṇu as Balarāma, was in Devakī's womb, the Supreme Lord Vishṇu asked his illusive power Yogamāyā to transfer the foetus from Devakī's womb to the womb of Rohiṇī, another wife of Vasudeva, residing in hiding in Nanda's Gokula out of Kamsa's fear. Yogamāyā carried out the mission and Balarāma was born there and Kamsa had no knowledge of this. The citizens of Mathura only knew that Devakī had miscarried.

Kamsa put Devakī and Vasudeva in prison. Now the Supreme Lord Vishṇu as Krishṇa entered Devakī's womb as the eighth child. Devakī delivered her child when the star Rohiṇī was ascendant and other constellations shed holy light. Vasudeva saw the wonderful boy with four arms, bearing a conch, a mace and other weapons, and the *Śrīvatsa* on his chest and *Kaustubha* gem around his neck. Knowing that Hari was born as his son, he was overwhelmed with joy and paid obeisance to him as the Supreme Purusha, with folded hands. Devakī also paid homage to the Lord as omniscient and immutable. Then Hari by means of his illusive energy, withdrew his divine form and assumed the form of an ordinary child[3] (fig.21).

It was a dark night when the eighth child of Devakī was born in the prison cell. It was raining very heavily and there were blazing lightnings and thunders. To save the child from Kamsa's wrath Vasudeva decided to take him to Gokula. At the very same time,

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Yogamāyā (the illusive energy of Krishṇa) was born to Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda of Gokula. Under the influence of the Lord's illusive power the guards of the prison cell were under a deep slumber and the doors of the prison opened automatically. When Vasudeva came out with the child in the midst of the heavy downpour, he was protected by the serpent Ananta with his hoods. There was a strong current in the river Yamunā because of excessive rainfall caused by Indra. But when Vasudeva came with the child to the banks of the Yamunā, Yāmuna gave passage to him to cross (figs. 22-28). Reaching Gokula he found the citizens asleep under the influence of Yogamāyā. Taking this opportunity, he entered the house of Nanda. He placed the child on the bed of Yaśodā and took away the daughter, without the knowledge of Yaśodā who was fast asleep (fig. 29). Thereafter he came back to Mathura and placed Yaśodā's daughter (Yogamāyā) on Devakī's bed.[4]

Hearing the cries of the newborn babe, the guards rose from sleep and hastened to inform Kamsa. Kamsa, bewildered at the news, rushed to the prison cell with his hair dishevelled and seized the child and dashed her against the surface of the stone. The child slipped out of Kamsa's grasp and rose in the sky and assumed the form of a goddess with various attributes (fig. 30) and declared that it was of no avail to Kamsa to kill her, a female child, as the one who would cause his destruction was born elsewhere.

Kamsa went back to his residence and called his ministers and informed them of what Yogamāyā (daughter of Devakī) had predicted. Like Kamsa himself, his advisers were against the gods, the Brāhmaṇas and the sacrifice and said that all the children that were recently born should be put to death.

When Kamsa was plunged in deep anxiety the whole Vraja was full of joy on account of the birth of Nanda's son. Gokula was decorated with variegated pennons, flags and garlands. Various musical instruments were played upon and the Brāhmaṇas pronounced benedictions on the new-born child (fig. 31). The kingdom of Nanda was filled with prosperity.[5]

After the celebration of the birth ceremony of his son, Nanda came to Mathura to pay his annual tributes. Vasudeva came to see him. Both of them were happy meeting each other. Vasudeva told Nanda that the latter should not stay in Mathura for a long time for Gokula was likely to be visited by many calamities. Thus warned, Nanda returned to Gokula soon. To put his plan to action, Kamsa deputed Pūtanā to visit Vraja and put to death the new-born children. She was dreadful in her appearance, but assumed the form of a beautiful damsel to deceive the people of Vraja. She entered the room where Śrī Krishṇa was lying in his bed and to fulfil her object, she took the child who was none other than the supreme divinity in her lap. She gave him her poisoned milk. But the mighty Lord sucked it with such a force that she succumbed (figs.32-35).[6] All the inhabitants of Gokula were surprised at this wonderful deed of the child. Nanda returning to Gokula took his son on his lap and smelled his head and obtained great delight.

On the day of the Utthānika ceremony (birth ceremony of Krishṇa) the cowherds of Gokula assembled in the palace of Nanda. Yaśodā bathed Krishṇa with the water of sacred rivers. The Brāhmaṇas pronounced benedictions and the musical instruments were sounded. Yaśodā finding Krishṇa asleep laid him down underneath a cart (Śakaṭa) with pots containing many kinds of delicious liquids. After some time Krishṇa, being desirous of sucking the mother's milk cried aloud but as Yaśodā was busy in domestic affairs, she did not listen to his cries. In anger, he threw his legs up and down and struck by the feet of the child, the cart was thrown at a distance (figs. 36-39). Yaśodā was afraid; she took the child in her lap, suckled him and asked the Brāhmaṇas to perform auspicious rites for the well-being of the child.

One day when Yaśodā was caressing the child Krishṇa on her lap, she found him as heavy as a mountain peak. Being unable to bear him she placed the child on the ground. At that moment a demon called Triṇāvarta came there, deputed by Kamsa, in the form of a whirl-wind and took away the child. The demon raised dust and blinded the eyes of the inhabitants of Gokula. Everybody was bewildered and nobody could see himself or others. Triṇāvarta reached the sky with the child but he could not go very far, being unable to bear his burden. The demon wanted to leave the child but he could not, as the divine child remained firm in embracing him by the neck. Now, Triṇāvarta became powerless, and fell down from the sky on a stone and his body was totally shattered (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 7). Seeing the child hanging on the Asura's breast, the Gopīs were struck with both fear and wonder and they took away the child and restored him to mother Yaśodā (fig. 40).

One day when Yaśodā was suckling Krishṇa with her milk, he yawned and to her utter amazement she saw inside the boy's mouth the whole universe. Struck with wonder she closed her eyes.

Vasudeva deputed Garga, the priest of the Yadus, to visit Vraja. Nanda received him with folded hands as a mark of respect to him

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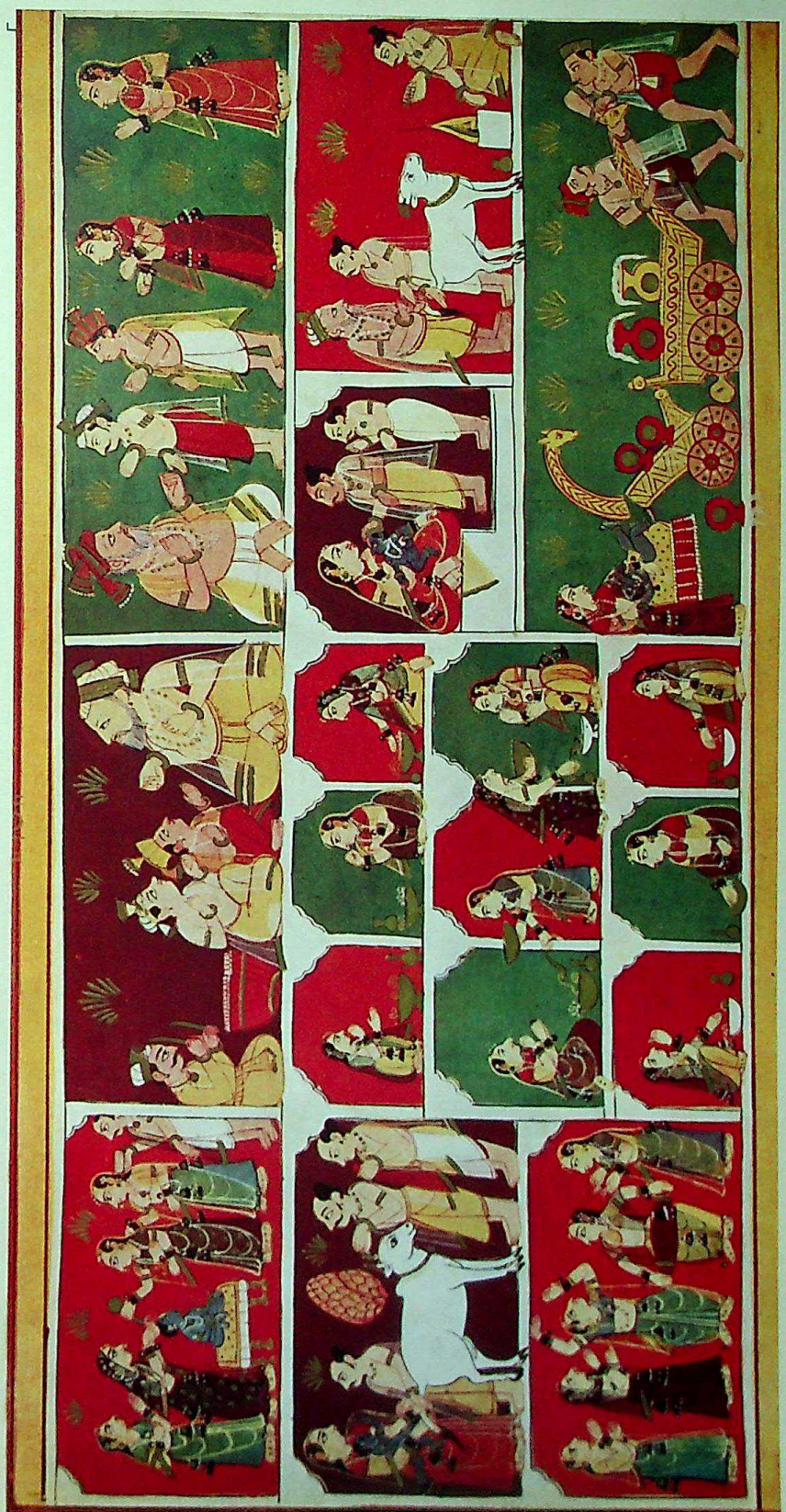

Scenes from Krishna's life, Malwa, end of the 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Yaśodā punishing Krishṇa, Malwa, late 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

and asked him to perform the purificatory rites for his son. Garga said that if he performed the ceremony publicly, everyone would suspect this child to be a son of Vasudeva, and Kamsa suspecting this child as the eighth son of Devakī, would try his best to kill him and thus a great calamity would follow. Thus advised, Nanda requested Garga to perform the rites in a secret place. The ceremony was performed secretly and Garga named the son of Rohiṇī as Rāma and also Balarāma because of his possessing excessive prowess. He was also named Saṅkarshaṇa. The sage, however, kept secret of the fact that Balarāma was also in Devakī's womb, but was transferred to the womb of Rohiṇī out of Kamsa's fear. The other child whom Nanda knew to be his own was named Krishṇa as he was black in complexion. Garga said that in the three previous Yugas the boy assumed white, red and yellow colours (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 8). He described his transcendental qualities indirectly in many ways. This child would

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Krishṇa kills Keśi, Malwa, late 17th century,
National Museum, New Delhi.

be so powerful that he would protect his devotees from all calamities (fig. 41).

When Balarāma and Krishṇa crawled speedily on the muddy pastures of Vraja, their anklets and bangles made a tinkling sound. When they returned home, milk spontaneously oozed out from their mothers' breasts. In the course of their childish sports they sometimes went to the cowshed and caught hold of the tails of the calves. The ladies of Gokula looked with wonder at their pastimes forgetting their household duties. They became so naughty that their mothers found it difficult to save their playful sons from the dangers from the horned animal, fire, serpents, thorns, etc. Within a short time they began to walk swiftly and other cowherd boys joined them in their sports which delighted the hearts of the milkmaids (figs. 42-45). Sometimes they went to the cowsheds of the other Gopis and let loose their calves which did drink all the milk of the cows. The wives of the cowherds seeing

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the beautiful boyish pranks of Krishṇa sometimes went to his mother and spoke to her about his mischiefs. Taking recourse to various means, Krishṇa stole away curd and milk. Sometimes he distributed his drinks among the monkeys. When milk and curd, etc. were placed in a sling beyond the reach of his hands, he stood on wooden seats and mortars to reach them (figs. 47-56).

One day Balarāma, Krishṇa and other cowherd boys were playing together. Balarāma and other boys came to Yaśodā and said that Krishṇa had eaten earth. Yaśodā caught hold of Krishṇa by the hand and reprimanded him. Krishṇa told her that the boys had told an untruth and if she did not believe him, she could examine his mouth. Yaśodā asked him to open his mouth, and to her surprise saw the whole universe, the mobile and immobile creation inside his mouth. Thus Krishṇa showed Yaśodā his *Virāṭarūpa*, the all-embracing form (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 8).

Once upon a time Yaśodā was churning curd (figs. 47-49) and was singing the childhood pastimes of Krishṇa. Out of affection for Krishṇa milk trickled down from her breast. Just then Krishṇa came to her and prevented her from churning. She suckled him for a while and went away to attend to some urgent domestic work. Krishṇa became angry as his thirst for mother's milk was not satisfied. Out of anger he broke the pot containing curd. On her return Yaśodā found the mischief and wanted to chastise the boy but Krishṇa ran away in great fear. After a chase she caught hold of Krishṇa and chastised him. Krishṇa was weeping in fear. Finding him terrified, she left the rod but wished to bind him like an ordinary infant. But she found the rope short by two fingers. Then she added to it another piece of rope but still found it short. Seeing her mother perspiring in her attempts to bind him, Krishṇa allowed himself to be bound. Yaśodā tied him to a wooden mortar with a strong rope and went away to attend to some domestic work (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 9). Krishṇa saw two trees nearby and dragged the mortar between them. As he dragged the mortar with a great force, both the trees were uprooted. These two trees in their previous births were two sons of Kuvera, called Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 10). Because of their pride they were cursed by Nārada and born as Yamalārjuna.[1] When the trees fell, both of them as a result of Krishṇa's grace were released and assumed their previous forms (figs. 57-59).

One day Krishṇa went to the bank of the Yamunā to play with Balarāma and other cowherd boys. When Krishṇa and Balarāma returned, Yaśodā out of great concern for their welfare performed auspicious ceremonies.

Gokula was visited by many calamities, so the Gopas did not consider it advisable to live any longer in Gokula (fig. 64). Nanda consulted with other elderly cowherds and decided to migrate to Vrindavana which was pleasant in all seasons, and which provided vast pasture grounds for the animals to graze in. Carts were provided for the old men, women and children for their journey to Vrindavana. The cowherd men, equipped with bows and arrows, followed them. The bulls and the cows were placed in front (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. XI). The damsels of Vraja, dressed in costly *sārīs* and ornaments, chanted the pastimes of Krishṇa. Yaśodā and Rohiṇī were seated on a cart, with Krishṇa and Balarāma on their laps (fig. 65). Nanda was on another cart.

Once when Krishṇa and other Gopa boys were tending cows on the bank of the Yamunā, a demon in the guise of a calf came (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 11). Krishṇa held it by its hind legs and threw it up at the top of a tree. The demon and the tree fell down with a great crash (fig. 66). Again, once as the cowherd boys brought their cows to a tank so that they could drink water, suddenly a great Asura, called Bakāsura having the form of a crane came. It quickly devoured Krishṇa. Seeing this, Balarāma and other Gopas became frightened. But soon it disgorged Krishṇa who was burning up his throat. Bakāsura wanted to kill him with its beak. Krishṇa, however, held the demon by its beak and tore it into pieces (figs. 67-69). On hearing this miraculous incident, the Gopas were astonished (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 11).

Once upon a time Krishṇa along with his playmates came to the forest with his calves. Krishṇa had a flute in his hand, and others had in their hands strings, horns and rods and they began to sport at various places. They decorated themselves with flowers, leaves, peacock feathers and various other articles. Some boys ran after the shadows of the birds flying in the sky, some followed the gait of the swans and went along with them, some danced with the peacocks, some dragged the tails of the monkeys, while others jumped from tree to tree along with the monkeys, and some waded through the streams along with the toads.

One day, when the Gopas were sporting in the forest, there came a demon called Aghāsura. He was the younger brother of Pūtanā and Baka who met their destruction at the hands of Krishṇa. Aghāsura was unable to tolerate the sports of the Gopas and became determined to put an end to their lives in order to avenge the death of his sister and brother (Pūtanā and Baka). He assumed the form of a huge serpent and lay on the road, keeping his big mouth wide

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open. His lower lip touched the earth and the upper the clouds. The inside of the mouth was dense-dark.

The Gopa boys took Aghāsura as one of the wonderful things of Vrindavana, and they along with the calves entered his mouth out of curiosity. They knew that if it devoured them, Krishṇa was sure to save them from its clutches. Agha did not at once devour them, as it expected Krishṇa also to enter its mouth. Now finding the plight of the boys and the calves, Krishṇa, the saviour of all, also entered the mouth of Agha. Krishṇa increased his own form in the throat of Agha with the result that its throat was obstructed and its eyes burst out of sockets (fig. 70). Thus Krishṇa saved the boys and the calves from the clutches of Agha. Krishṇa was five years of age at the time he killed Aghāsura (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 12).

After rescuing the Gopas and calves from the clutches of Aghāsura, Krishṇa asked his friends to repair to the bank of the Yamunā where they should take their meals as they were all hungry. As they were taking meals, the calves strayed into the deep forest, overgrown with new grass and leaves.

Now Brahmā saw with wonder the great sports of Krishṇa and being curious to see more of his achievements as a boy, he stole away the calves and the boys and hid himself. When Krishṇa did not find them even after a long search, he thought that it was the work of Brahmā himself. In order to satisfy the mothers of the cowherd boys and also to prove that Vishṇu is identical with the universe, Krishṇa converted himself into as many boys and calves as they were and he returned home with the newly created calves and boys. The milkmaids loved Krishṇa as their child but from today their love became more ardent. The situation continued for about a year. Some five or six days before the completion of a year Krishṇa and Balarāma while tending the calves entered into the forest. At that time, some cows, grazing on the summit of the mount Govardhana, saw their calves grazing near Vraja. They ran headlong to be united with their calves. The milkmen saw also their sons along with the old cows and in joy began to shed tears. Brahmā's trick did not work. He begged pardon of Krishṇa and chanted his praises (fig. 71) (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs. 13 and 14).

The inhabitants of Vraja entertained a great love for Krishṇa and this love was far superior to that they had cherished for their own children. Both Krishṇa and Balarāma passed their childhood in Vraja in various pastimes and joy.

Now Krishṇa was six years of age. He spent his time in tending cows in the company of Balarāma and other cowherd boys, who sang his glory. Ever joyful and delighted at heart Krishṇa and his followers roamed in the forest tending their cows on the banks of the streams near the mountain. Krishṇa sang imitating the hum of intoxicated bees and his own achievements were recited by his followers. Sometimes, he would imitate the sounds of the cuckoo and sometimes of the quaking of the sweet toned swans. Sometimes to entertain his playmates and make them laugh, he danced in imitation of the dancing peacocks.

One day, a cowherd called Śrīdāmā said to Krishṇa that there was a great forest near-by, abounding in palm trees with fruits. Unfortunately the fruits were enjoyed only by the evil-souled Asura, named Dhenuka. That Asura roamed in the garb of an ass and always was surrounded by his kinsmen who were equally powerful like him. As the cowherds wanted to taste some palm fruits, Krishṇa and Balarāma along with their friends entered the palm forest and shook the palm trees. The ass-demon came running in great anger and kicked with his two hind legs the breast of Balarāma. Balarāma caught hold of him by the legs and whirling him again and again threw the demon against a palm tree (fig. 72). The kinsmen of Dhenuka were similarly killed[a] (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 15).

The people of Vraja praised the marvellous achievements of Krishṇa and Balarāma. The sages and others showered flowers on them. The death of Dhenuka freed the Vrajavāsīs from its fear. Yaśodā and Rohiṇī pronounced upon their children their heartiest benedictions.

One day Krishṇa accompanied by the cowherds except Balarāma went near the river Kālindī. The cows were very much oppressed with heat. As they drank the poisoned water of the river, they fell down lifeless on the bank of the river. Krishṇa, by his mere glance at them, revived them to life.

In the river Kālindī, there was another lake which was the abode of the serpent Kāliya. Kāliya polluted the water of the river by its venom. In order to subdue the serpent, Krishṇa jumped down from a Kadamba tree into the river and began to play in the water striking it with his arms. The noise created by Krishṇa, enraged Kāliya and the latter encircled Krishṇa with his coils. As Krishṇa was caught in the coils of the serpent, his companions were all frightened and fell senseless on the ground. Out of fear the cows were lowing aloud. During this time, evil portents were seen in Vraja. There were earthquakes and shooting of meteors through the sky, indicating the advent of a catastrophe. The people of Vraja who had affection for Krishṇa inferred from the evil omens that some calamity might have happened to their dear Krishṇa.

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The hour of cow-dust, Kishangarh, c. 1705, National Museum, New Delhi.

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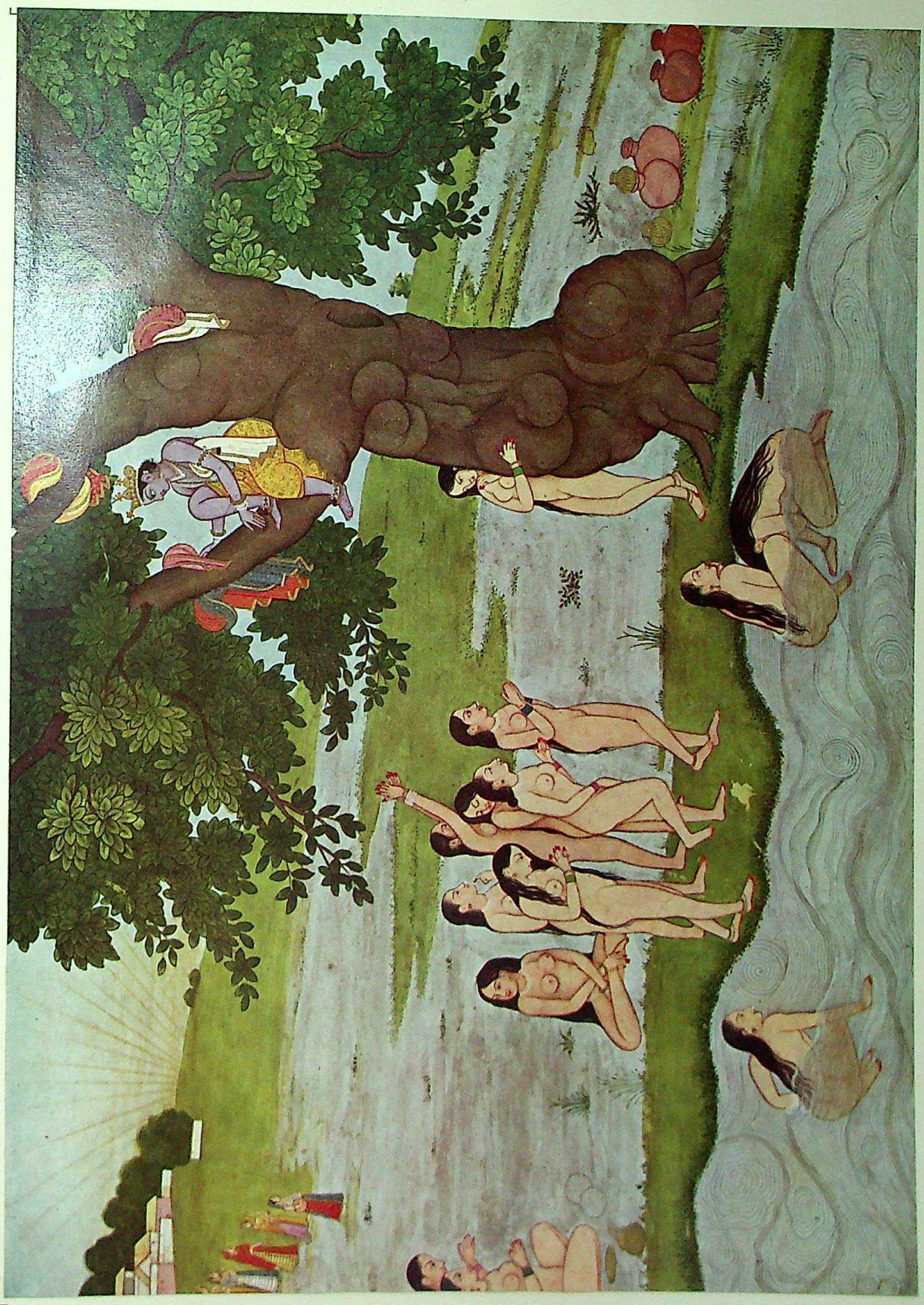

Vastraharaṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of the cowherd girls), Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Balarāma alone was not terrified as he was conscious of Krishṇa's power. In search of Krishṇa the cowherds came to the river Kālindī, and they were horrified to see Krishṇa entrapped by a snake. To the joy of all Krishṇa set himself free from the coils of the serpent. Kāliya suffered extreme pain on account of the weight of Krishṇa's body. Because of the constant fight with Krishṇa the serpent became tired and powerless. Taking this opportunity Krishṇa stood on the serpent's head and began to dance on it (figs. 73-87). At this, the wives of the Gandharvas, Siddhas, sages, and celestials began to play out of delight on *mridaṅgas* and other musical instruments. Due to the wild dance of Krishṇa, Kāliya's thousand hoods were rendered powerless and he submitted to Krishṇa's will. The wives of the serpent felt distressed at Kāliya's plight and pleased Krishṇa with various hymns describing him as the supreme reality, transcending everything and as one who is the omniscient and the creator of the universe. Pleased by the words of the Kāliya and the praise of his wives, Krishṇa spared Kāliya's life and asked him to leave the river and go with his kinsmen to the ocean (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs. 15-17). From this time the water of the Yamunā became free from poison.[9]

Having subdued Kāliya, Krishṇa met his parents and other milkmen and women who rushed to the river Kālindī out of fear and their great concern over Krishṇa's life. They embraced him and looked upon him with love again and again. Yaśodā placed him on her lap and continuously shed tears of joy. As they were all tired and hungry, they spent the night on the bank of the river. At the dead of night a forest fire broke out and engulfed them all. Overwhelmed with fear the Gopas and their wives cried for Krishṇa's help. Lord Krishṇa, endowed with endless energy, drank the forest fire (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 17) and every one was saved (fig. 88).

Krishṇa and Balarāma, surrounded by the relatives, went back to Vraja. The summer season set in. Being desirous of sports, Krishṇa along with the cowherd boys and cows entered the beautiful forest resonant with the regaling notes of various birds. Decorating their persons with various ornaments, peacock feathers and foliage they began to sing, dance and wrestle. When Krishṇa danced, some of the boys played musical instruments and others cheered him up with claps and played flutes and horns.

One day when Krishṇa and Balarāma were engaged in various sports with the cowherd boys, an Asura, named Pralamba came disguised as a cowherd (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 18). Krishṇa who was all-knowing, understood the intention of the Asura, and desirous of killing him Krishṇa accepted him as a playmate. They indulged in various sorts of pastimes and it was decided that the winners would ride on the shoulders of the defeated party. Krishṇa being defeated in the game carried Śrīdāma on the back and similarly Pralamba, being defeated carried Balarāma. Soon this Asura assumed his real form with a view to killing Balarāma and ran away to a distant place. But the latter gave the Asura a heavy blow on his head, which was shattered into pieces. Vomitting blood and losing his sense the demon fell down with a terrible roar on the ground[10] (figs. 89-92). When Pralamba was slain by Balarāma all the cowherd boys said, "Well done, well done."

When the cowherd boys were engaged in play, the cows and calves afflicted with heat entered into a pasture overgrown with grass. Krishṇa and Balarāma did not find them even after a long search. They followed the track marked by the hoofs of the cattle. At that time a great conflagration helped by a strong wind was raging in the forest and the cowherds and the cows being frightened sought the help of Krishṇa. The Almighty Krishṇa drank up that fire by his mouth. The cowherds were astonished at the achievements of Krishṇa and Balarāma including the destruction of Pralamba by Balarāma and the swallowing of the forest fire by Krishṇa (figs. 93 and 94) and they recounted these stories to their wives.

When the rainy season set in, the streamlets of Vraja that were dry in summer began to overflow with water. The earth became green with the verdant grass. The fields yielded plenty of corn. One day during the rainy season, Krishṇa and Balarāma, surrounded by the cowherds and their kine entered a forest luxuriant with ripe dates and blackberries. The dwellers of the forest were greatly delighted to see the sports of Krishṇa and the cowherd boys (figs. 95-97).

When there was rain, Krishṇa took shelter underneath a tree or in a cave. He took his food, sitting on rocks near the water along with Saṅkarshṇa and other cowherds (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 20).

Vraja assumed a great natural beauty during the autumn. People enjoyed cool breeze coming from flower gardens which removed all their fatigue.

At the advent of the autumn the breeze carrying the fragrance of lotuses continuously blew. The trees were decorated with flowers and the lakes, rivers and mountains rang with the humming of bees and chirping of birds (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 20). Krishṇa grazed the cattle in the deep forest in the company of the cowherds playing his magic flute which captivated the hearts of the damsels of Vraja (fig. 98). The Gopīs considered it to be the

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greatest felicity possible to have a look at the charming face of Krishṇa (figs. 99 and 100).

On the first month of Hemanta, the damsels of Vraja worshipped the Goddess Kātyāyanī on the bank of the river Kālindī. They all prayed to have the son of Nanda as their husband. Having concentrated their minds on Krishṇa they observed the above vow for a month.

One day the damsels of Vraja came to the river Yamunā, and leaving their clothes on the bank, entered the water and began to sport singing the glories of Krishṇa. In order to punish the damsels for bathing naked in the river against Varuṇa's injunction, Krishṇa came and took away their clothes and hastily climbed a Kadamba tree and told the damsels to come up and take the clothes from him. The Gopīs were overwhelmed with tender feelings at Krishṇa's jokes, but they did not come at once out of shyness. Krishṇa asked them to bend their heads down, after holding the folded palms over their heads (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch.22, *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, 27). The damsels having done as Krishṇa wished, Krishṇa returned the clothes back to the them who were inspired with love for him (figs. 101-106).

Once the cowherds felt hungry. Krishṇa sent some Gopas to get some food for them from the Brāhmaṇas who were performing a sacrifice. The Gopas came to the place where the Brāhmaṇas were performing the sacrifice and begged of them for food. They said that Krishṇa and Balarāma were oppressed with hunger and some food should be given for them. The Brāhmaṇas were vain-glorious and did not care to supply any food for Krishṇa and Balarāma (fig. 107). The Gopas came back disappointed, and related everything to Krishṇa and Balarāma. Krishṇa then told the Gopas to go to the wives of the Brāhmaṇas and ask for some food from them. These ladies were devoted to him, and they would surely act according to his request. As the Gopas came to the Brāhmāṇa ladies and asked for some food for Krishṇa, they carried four kinds of delicious foods in brass plates and pots and came to meet their beloved Krishṇa (fig. 108), disregarding the words of their husbands, fathers, brothers and friends. When they returned to their husbands, the latter did not become jealous of or angry with their wives. Only one lady who was prevented from meeting Krishṇa by her husband died and she was united in mind with the Almighty Lord (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch.23).

Nanda and other Gopas of Vraja were preparing for a sacrifice in honour of Indra. Krishṇa questioned the utility of such a sacrifice. The Gopas were dwellers of the forest, and on mountains. So they should celebrate a sacrifice in honour of the mountain for the benefit of the king, the Brāhmaṇas and the mountains, with the articles gathered for the worship of Indra. Krishṇa said these words to Nanda with a view to crushing the pride of Indra. As advised by Krishṇa, the cowherds keeping the cattle ahead of them circumambulated in reverence the mountain and sang the glories of Krishṇa and the Brāhmaṇas pronounced benedictions on them. Krishṇa assumed a transcendental form and ate the articles of adoration, saying, "I am the mountain", and the cowherds bowed down unto him in reverence.

Having come to know that his worhip had been stopped, at the advice of Krishṇa, Indra became furious and asked Samvartaka to pour incessant water for the destruction of the universe. As desired by Indra, the clouds devastated Gokula with heavy showers accompanied by terrible flashes of lightning and thunderbolts. The whole of Vraja was in deluge. The Gopas and the cows, shivering with cold, sought shelter in Govinda. The cowherds said, "O Krishṇa, O Krishṇa of illustrious prowess, O Lord, the kingdom of Gokula hath no other master than thy own-self. O thou affectionate towards thy devotees, it behoveth thee to save us from the enraged divinities." In order to save the inhabitants of Vraja from deluge, Krishṇa upheld the mount Govardhana with one of his hands as easily as a person holds an umbrella over his head (figs. 109-122). The cowherds with their wives, their carts, and other belongings came underneath the uplifted mountain. Krishṇa held the mountain for seven days and Indra was struck with amazement at Krishna's feat. He stopped his own clouds from causing a shower. The lives of the cowherds were thus saved[11] and Indra's pride was humbled. The marvellous deeds of Krishṇa captured the hearts of the people of Vraja.

The cowherds were not aware of Krishṇa's greatness or prowess, so all those feats amazed them beyond measure. They were recounting amongst themselves how it was possible for a boy of seven, born in the cowherd's family to achieve such wonderful deeds. They considered that with regard to his qualities the son of Nanda (i.e. Krishṇa) was equal to Nārāyaṇa.

When Krishṇa upheld the mount Govardhana, Indra and Surabhi came to him. Indra with his pride humiliated bowed down to him and addressed him as the father of the universe and its supreme sovereign. His incarnations are for the destruction of those rulers who are the burdens of the earth and saying this Indra asked his pardon. Surabhi, the celestial cow, also praised Krishṇa as the foremost of the Yogins and the soul of the universe. Then Surabhi with her milk and Indra with the water of the Ganges drawn

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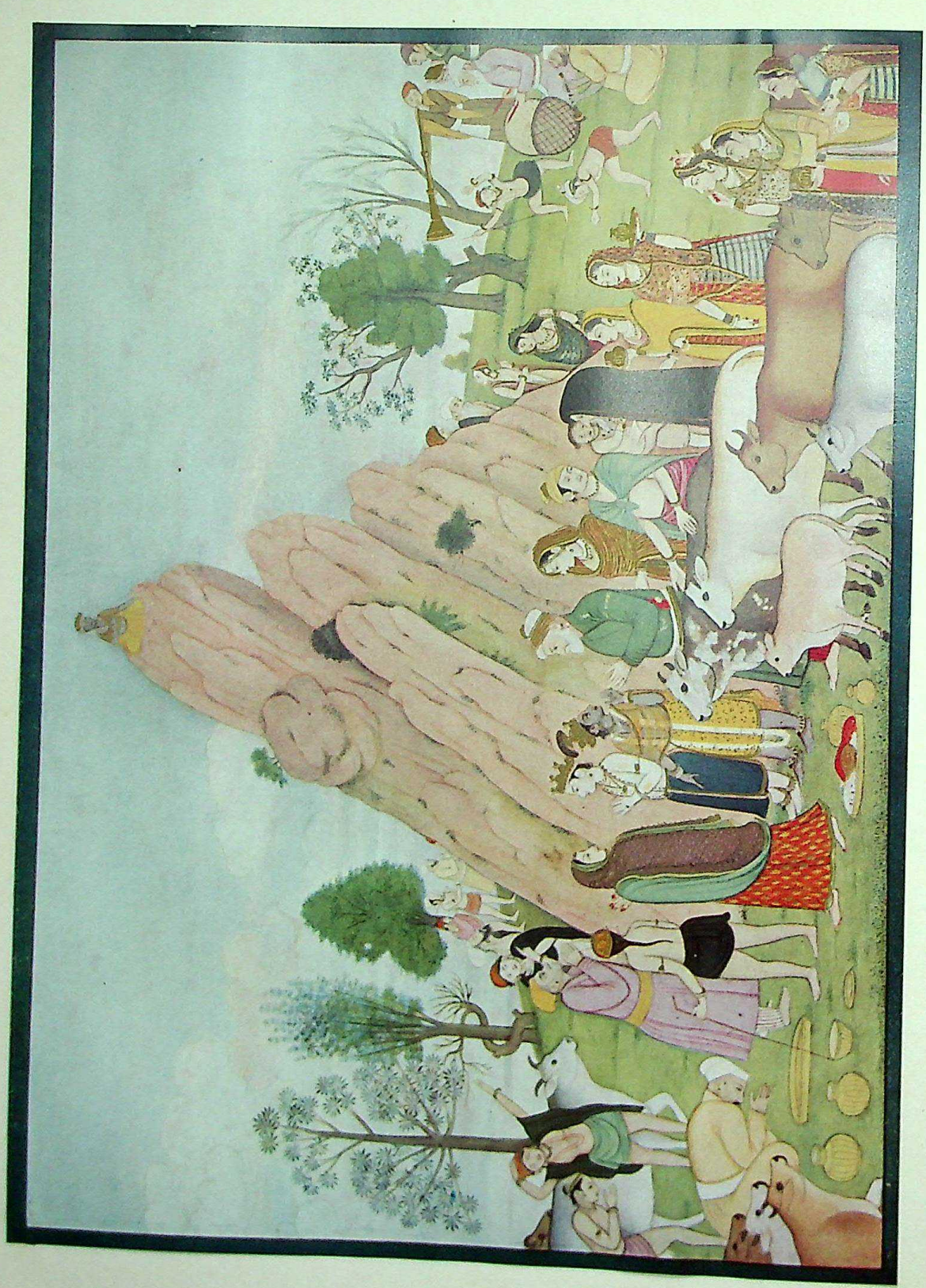

The worship of Mount Govardhana, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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by the trunk of Airāvata bathed Krishṇa and thus performed his coronation and conferred on him the title of Govinda (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs. 25-27) (figs. 123 and 124). "Tumbura, Nārada and the Vidyādharas, Gandharvas, Siddhas and Chāraṇas sang his glory while the celestial damsels danced."

Nanda observed fast on the Ekādaśī *tithi* and next day he went to take bath in the river Yamunā. The time in which he took bath was not auspicious and for this fault a servant of Varuṇa took him to Varuṇa's abode. Bewildered at this, Nanda's companions were wailing, calling Krishṇa and Balarāma for help. Having come to know what had happened to Nanda, Krishṇa and Balarāma went to Varuṇa and sought Nanda's release. Varuṇa received them with respect and expressed regret for the foolish act of one of his servants. Krishṇa brought his father safe from Varuṇa's abode (fig. 125) and thus enhanced the delight of the inhabitants of Vraja. Very kindly Krishṇa showed them the *Brahma-hrada* and the *Vaikuntha-loka* (the abode of the supreme lord) (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 28).

It was a delightful autumnal night when the Gopīs captivated by the melody of Krishṇa's flute came to meet him as the sole object of their love (fig. 126). The Gopīs were no doubt prevented in doing so by their husbands. But the damsels (whose heart was captured by Krishṇa) did not pay any heed to what their husbands said. When the Gopīs met Krishṇa who was the supreme Brahman, though not so recognised by them, Krishṇa asked them to go back to their homes as their husbands would be anxiously waiting for them. Krishṇa said, "The calves and your children are waiting in your absence. Go ye and suckle them and milk the cows. Or it may be that you have come here out of affection you cherish for me, and owing to your hearts captivated by me. This is, indeed, natural for all beings are pleased with me. The supreme duties of women are to serve their husbands, with a sincere heart..."

The words of Krishṇa frustrated the hopes of the Gopīs, as they, renouncing everything had come to join him. They said, "O thou dearest one, with the nectareous flow from thy lips, do thou extinguish the fire of desire kindled by the melodious music of thy flute and by the side-long glances accompanied by bewitching smiles. Otherwise, our bodies being burnt by this fire, as well as of separation from thee, O dear one, attain your proximiy by meditating on thy foot." The earnest appeal of the Gopīs delighted Krishṇa, who was the foremost of those versed in Yoga, and joined in dalliances with them (fig. 127). He wandered with them on the bank of the river Yamunā. He delighted them with close embraces and various other love sports and tricks. Thus receiving honour from the Almighty (high-souled Krishṇa) each damsel considered that she was Krishṇa's most favourite, and became elated with pride. In order to humble their pride Krishṇa suddenly disappeared from the scene, and the damsels became greatly distressed. Their hearts were so deeply absorbed in Krishṇa that in his absence they imitated his lovely acts. Singing his glory they wandered from place to place in madness in search of him. They enquired of every tree and every antelope they met about Krishṇa's whereabouts. Thus moving in the forest they discovered Krishṇa's foot-prints and advanced following them. But to their dismay they found his foot-prints intermixed with those of a lady who was presumably his favourite Gopī.

The foot-prints of Krishṇa's favourite damsel caused great grief among the Gopīs. But they were all the more hurt when they missed her foot-prints after going some distance. They concluded for certain that Krishṇa must have carried her on his shoulder.

The Gopī with whom Krishṇa was wandering in the forest (fig. 128) considered herself to be the best of all women and out of pride she asked Krishṇa to take her on his shoulder as she pretended to be fatigued. Krishṇa asked her to climb his sholders but suddenly disappeared and the Gopī was deeply plunged in grief (fig. 129). The other damsels who were unable to bear Krishṇa's separation (figs. 130-132) and followed his foot-prints, soon met their distressed friend. They were completely united mentally with him; so they did not recollect their abodes. Returning to the bank of the river Kālindī, with their thoughts concentrated on Krishṇa, and anxiously awaiting his arrival, they sang in praise of Krishṇa. The Gopīs were singing and lamenting, as they were unable to bear his separation. Krishṇa, who is kind to his devotees, was attracted by the piteous lamentations of the Gopīs and he appeared. The Gopīs forgot their grief of separation and went in his company to the sandy banks of the Kālindī. It was a delightful spot with the air carrying the fragrance of the full-blown Kunda flowers. The night was lighted by the silvery beams of the autumnal moon.

Krishṇa, the Lord of the Yoga, began his sportive dance with the Gopīs. They all stood hand in hand and Krishṇa stationed himself between every two of the damsels. Each damsel thought that Krishṇa was only beside her and embraced her alone. The Gandharvas began to sing Krishṇa's praises. In the midst of the Gopīs Krishṇa appeared most beautiful 'as the large emerald shines in the midst of the other gems'. The whole atmosphere was resonant with the sounds of the bracelets, bangles and *Kiṅkiṇis* of the Gopīs, who were, out of themselves, in joy

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in the company of their beloved Krishṇa. Enjoying Krishṇa's embrace, they sang in his praise. 'In this circular dance, known as Rāsa (figs. 133-136) the black bees performed the role of singers'. Krishṇa multiplied himself into as many forms as there were Gopīs. In order to remove their fatigue, Krishṇa entered into the water of the Yamunā with them and indulged in various sports. The husbands of the Gopīs thought that their wives were always by their sides.[12] When the night was over, these beautiful damsels, permitted by Krishṇa, unwillingly went back to their abodes (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs 29-33).

As some of the *Purāṇas* and other medieval texts would show the most favourite Gopī of Krishṇa was Rādhā. The Rādhā-Krishṇa theme has inspired many artists who have in their works shown effectively the height of their love both through separation and re-union (figs. 137-144 and 147).

On one festive occasion the cowherds came to Ambikāvana to worship the Goddess Ambikā. They took ablutions in the water of the river Sarasvatī and offered worship to Śiva and Pārvatī with various articles. At night when the cowherds were sleeping, a huge snake came and caught hold of Nanda. The latter cried for Krishṇa's help. Krishṇa kicked the serpent with his feet and to everybody's wonder, it released Nanda and cast off the snake body and assumed the form of a Gandharva, and told Krishṇa that in his previous birth as a Gandharva under the name of Sudarśana he mocked at the Rishis Virūpa and Aṅgirasa and because of their curse, he had to be born as a snake. Now through Krishṇa's grace he regained his former form (fig. 145).

The beautiful ladies of Vraja were greatly attached to Krishṇa and they welcomed the advent of the night to enjoy his company. Hearing the enchanting music of Krishṇa in the moon-lit night the ladies were so bewitched that they fell senseless on the ground and their ornaments and garlands fell from their persons.

When Krishṇa and Balarāma were sporting in the forest, a demon called Śaṅkhachūḍa who was a follower of Kamsa came and carried away the damsels and the latter wept aloud. Krishṇa and Balarāma followed the demon with large sāla trees in their hands and overtook him. Terrified at this, he left the damsels and fled away (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 34). Govinda (Krishṇa), however, pursued and killed him and seized the *maṇi* (jewel) from his head which he gave to Balarāma.

The women of Vraja passed the time in recollecting the glories of Krishṇa. During the nights they enjoyed his company and during the day time when he with other cowherds went to a forest for tending the cows, their minds remained engrossed in his thought.

When Krishṇa played his flute, the bullocks, the deer, and other animals were so charmed that they stood at the distance with their ears holding a mouthful of grass by their teeth. Again the auspicious cowherd women used to say amongst themselves that when, clothed in garments befitting wrestlers and decorated with peacock's feathers, fresh twigs, etc. Mukunda (Krishṇa) in the company of Balarāma and other cowherds called the cows by their respective names, then the flow of the rivers appeared to tarry, "as if desirous of obtaining the dust from his feet" blown away by the breeze.

One day, a huge demon in the form of a bull, came to Vraja, shaking the earth under this hoofs.[13] His dreadful roar caused the miscarriage of many pregnant women and cows. As the bull with his sharp horns was moving, the men and women of Vraja fled in fear, and sought the protection of Krishṇa. The Asura was enraged at the sight of Krishṇa and ran towards him. He (Krishṇa) caught hold of the animal by his horns and drove him to a long distance. The Asura rose again and assaulted Krishṇa with great speed. He took the Asura by his horns, pulled out one of his tusks and struck him (fig. 146). The Asura fell dead on the ground. The celestials showered flowers on Hari, who entered Vraja enhancing the joy of all (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 36).

At this moment Nārada appeared before Kamsa and informed him of the real position about Krishṇa, Balarāma and Yogamāyā. Because of Kamsa's fear Vasudeva had to send Krishṇa to Vraja. This information caused Kamsa's wrath and he again put Vasudeva and Devakī to prison. Kamsa summoned Keśī and asked him to go to Vraja to kill Krishṇa and Balarāma. Then he called Mushṭika and Chāṇūra, Sala and Toshalaka (the powerful wrestlers of Kamsa's court) to be ready to kill Krishṇa and Balarāma when brought to Mathura. Kamsa asked them to station his powerful elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa at the entrance to the wrestling arena and set it against Krishṇa and Balarāma as they would come to witness the *Dhanus* sacrifice. Kamsa then summoned Akrūra and asked him to go to Nanda's house and bring him, Krishṇa and Balarāma to Mathura.

Keśī came to Vrindavana assuming the form of a terrible horse (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 37). It assaulted Krishṇa with its mouth gaping and also struck him with his legs. Krishṇa caught hold of the Asura by the legs and threw it at a distance of one hundred *dhanus*. The animal again stood up and attacked Krishṇa, opening its mouth again. Krishṇa thrust

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Krishna revealing his divinity to Akrūra, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, 1760-1765, after pl. XVIII, Kangra Paintings of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa by Dr. M. S. Randhawa.

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his left arm into the mouth of Keśī, and as the arm of Krishṇa enlarged, the breath of the Asura was chocked[14] (figs. 148-150).

After Keśī was slain, Nārada came to Krishṇa and recounted his achievements. He said that in future he would have the opportunity of seeing the Lord's many other achievements, such as the killing of Kuvalayāpīḍa, Chāṇūra, Mushṭika, Saṅkhya, Yavana, Mura and Naraka as well as the carrying of Pārijāta, the releasing of Nriga from sins, the recovery of the gem Syamantaka, the destruction of Pauṇdraka, the burning of Kāśīpurī, the death of Dantavaktra, the slaying of Śiśupāla and the destruction of the Kaurava army through Arjuna. So saying, Nārada saluted Krishṇa and left for his abode.

One day while tending their cattle, the Gopas started their game in which some acted as thieves and others as protectors and keepers. At that moment, an Asura, called Vyoma, son of Maya, came disguised as a cowherd boy. Playing the role of a thief, he took many boys away who acted as lambs. Vyoma took them into a mountain cave and shut it with a piece of heavy stone. Krishṇa caught hold of the Asura whose form resembled a mighty mountain. Achyuta (Krishṇa) felled him down on the earth and slew him by choking his breath (fig. 151). Then he released the Gopa boys from the mountain cave (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 37).

Next to this incident Sūradāsa describes Krishṇa's sport with the Gopīs in a boat on the Yamunā and the toll-tax (Krishṇa's having curd from the Gopīs as tax) (figs. 152-155).

As desired by Kamsa Akrūra came to Vrindavana and after he took rest and had his meals, conveyed Kamsa's message to them. He told them about Kamsa's enmity to the race of the Yadus, what Nārada had told Kamsa and the object of his mission. Nanda informed all that he, Krishṇa and Balarāma would be leaving for Mathura next morning (fig. 156). This news distressed the wives of the Gopas. They turned pale and took heavy breaths. The thought of their impending separation from Krishṇa overwhelmed them. They blamed Akrūra to have come to Vrindavana to rob them of Krishṇa, and began to lament saying, "Govinda, Dāmodara and Mādhava, etc." (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 38).

At the appropriate time, Krishṇa and Balarāma took leave of Nanda (fig. 156) and started in Akrūra's chariot for Mathura. The cowherds headed by Nanda followed them. The wives of the cowherds followed Krishṇa's car with grief at heart. Seeing their plight Krishṇa consoled them saying that he would come back soon. The chariot proceeded to move but the Gopīs stood where they were as painted figures, till the top of the flag was visible (figs. 157 and 158).

Soon the chariot reached the bank of the river Kālindī. Krishṇa and Balarāma got down from the car, took their bath in the river and got back to the vehicle. When Akrūra came down and took ablutions in the water, he saw Krishṇa and Balarāma inside the water. But when he came up from the water he saw both of them seated in the car. Again, he dived into the water and saw Balarāma being eulogised by the Siddhas and the reptiles and asuras. He had one thousand heads and all the hoods were decorated with diadems. Akrūra saw another deity of blue complexion, dressed in yellow garments. He had in his hands a lotus, conch-shell, mace and discus. His body was embellished with *Śrīvatsa* and *Kaustubha*. Akrūra understood that this was none other than Śrī Krishṇa and he praised the lord with various hymns. This is how Krishṇa showed his own divine form to Akrūra in the water (fig. 159) (*Bhāgavata*, X, Chs. 39 and 40).

Having performed his rites, Akrūra got up from the water and began to drive the chariot and reached the vicinity of Mathura. Then he came to inform Kamsa of the arrival of Krishṇa and Balarāma and went home. Nanda and other cowherds had already reached Mathura by following a shorter route.[15]

After Akrūra left for his home, Krishṇa, Balarāma and other cowherd boys entered the city of Mathura and saw its gorgeous gardens, and houses decorated with costly jewels. The inhabitants of Mathura were looking intently on them while they were passing through the city. As they proceeded, they saw the royal washerman and asked him for some nice clothing. But he, who was a servant of Kamsa, resented it. Krishṇa became angry and gave him a blow and killed him (fig. 162). His followers fled away leaving all clothes and Krishṇa and Balarāma dressed themselves with the clothes according to their liking. After dressing nicely they went to the house of a florist, Sudāmā by name. He understood the greatness of Krishṇa and Balarāma and offered two exquisite garlands to them.

While going across the city of Mathura Krishṇa met a young beautiful damsel, disfigured, however, with a hump on her back. She was carrying a vessel of unguents for Kamsa. Her name was Trivakrā, also called Kubjā. She was captivated by the gracefulness of Krishṇa and Balarāma and besmeared them lavishly with unguent. Being pleased with Kubjā, Krishṇa made her body perfectly straight, by placing his two feet on her two toes and holding her chin with two fingers of his raised hand (figs. 160 and 161). Leaving

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her, as they proceeded further, they were received and worshipped with various articles by the merchants of the city.

In the course of time Krishṇa and Balarāma came to the palace where they saw a mighty bow, guarded by many men. Krishṇa out of sheer curiosity held the bow and snapped it into two. Immediately they were pursued by Kamsa's army. Beating Kamsa's men with the broken parts of the sacrificial bow Krishṇa came out of the arena and returned to the camp, where other cowherds were stationed, and passed the night happily. Kamsa saw many evil portents at night.

When the night was over, Kamsa gave orders for the commencement of the tournament. The citizens of Mathura took their seats on the platform and diases. The kings that were assembled also took up their own seats.

Chāṇūra, Mushṭika, Sala and Toshalaka took their respective positions in the arena. Nanda and other cowherds offered the presents they brought for the king and took their seat on the platform.

When Krishṇa and Balarāma finished their morning duties, they heard the sound of the kettle drums and the roar of the combatants. Hastily, they came to the portals of the arena where they found the huge elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa by name. The keeper of the elephant set the infuriated animal against Krishṇa. There ensued a fierce fight between the two. The elephant caught hold of Krishṇa by its trunk, but he slipped off. When the animal assaulted him again, he caught hold of it by the tail and then he struck it with his hand and threw it down and crushed it with his feet (figs. 163-167). He took out a tusk of the animal and entered the arena with it.

When he entered the arena, he appeared differently to the different people, as he was the embodiment of all *rasas* (sentiments).

Krishṇa and Balarāma were challenged by Chāṇūra and Mushṭika, the two powerful wrestlers of Kamsa. Krishṇa fought Chāṇūra and Balarāma Mushṭika according to various modes of dual combat. Krishṇa caught hold of Chāṇūra by the arms, whirled him in the air and violently dashed him on the ground and killed him. Balarāma also killed Mushṭika in a similar manner (figs. 168-170). Everyone applauded the deeds of Krishṇa and Balarāma except Kamsa, who was plunged in deep anxiety. Thereafter, Krishṇa rushed to Kamsa who was seated on his dias. Kamsa suddenly grasped his sword and buckle, but Krishṇa overpowered him. He dragged him down from the dias on the ground and killed him with the strokes of his fist (figs. 171 and 172). On Kamsa's death there was jubilation amongst all except his evil followers who cried in lamentation (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs. 41-44). Balarāma killed the eight brothers of Kamsa. Krishṇa consoled the wives of Kamsa and then released his parents from the prison. Krishṇa and Balarāma saluted them, and consoled them (fig. 173). Thereafter Krishṇa and Balarāma went to Ugrasena and declared him the king of Mathura (fig. 174).[16]

Krishṇa and Balarāma then met Nanda and paying due homage to him, expressed their overwhelming gratitude to him for all that he had done for them and asked him to go to Vraja.

Now at the instance of Vasudeva, Garga performed the *Upanayana* (sacred-thread ceremony) of Krishṇa and Balarāma and they attained to the status of the twice-born (fig. 175). Thereafter they went to Sāndīpani (who was born at Kāśī, but who lived at Avantī) for education (fig. 176). They were very devoted to their Guru and were instructed in *Śikshā*, *Kalpa*, *Vedāṅgas*, and all the *Vedas*. They also learnt from him the science of archery, the laws, *Mīmāṁsā*, logic and six expedients of politics. They easily mastered all the sciences and within sixty-four days, they became versed in all the sixty-four branches of learning.

When they offered some *dakshiṇā* to their teacher, the latter asked for the restoration to life of his son who was drowned in the ocean. near Prabhāsa. In obedience to their teacher's behest they came to Prabhāsa and asked the ocean to return the child. As the ocean informed that the preceptor's son was stolen by the Asura called Pañchajana living in the sea in the form of a conch, Krishṇa speedily entered into the water of the ocean and killed the Asura, but the boy was not found here. Krishṇa took away the conch, called Pāñchajanya (fig. 177) and visited the abode of Yama. Yama returned to Krishṇa the preceptor's son. Krishṇa took the child to his Guru and left for Mathura with Balarāma (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 45).[17]

Remembering the affection of Nanda and Yaśodā and the love of the Gopīs for him, Krishṇa asked Uddhava, his dearest friend, who was a disciple of Brihaspati, to go to Vraja to convey his news to them. The Gopīs were devoted to Krishṇa. They renounced everything for his sake and now they were spending their time in distress, suffering from the acute pangs of separation.

When Uddhava reached Vraja, it was morning. Nanda cordially received him (fig. 178) and embraced him in great delight. Thinking of Krishṇa, both Nanda and Yaśodā shed profuse tears. Uddhava consoled them saying that Krishṇa had not

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forgotten them and he was sure to come and and meet them.

Having come to know of Uddhava's arrival in Vraja, the Gopīs collected around him and asked him about Krishṇa and Balarāma. They abandoned all their bashfulness and began to sing in the presence of Uddhava, the glory of Krishṇa, showing their intense love for the Lord (fig. 179). They ardently asked Uddhava if Krishṇa, now in Mathura, which is an important city where he could meet more sophisticated ladies than in Vraja, remembered them or not. Remembering again and again the childhood incidents of Krishṇa and the Gopīs' sports with him, they became very much distressed at heart. They made it clear that it might be possible for Krishṇa to forget them in the new situation but it was hard for them to forget him in spite of his ungratefulness and hard-heartedness. They asked Uddhava when Krishṇa would come to meet them to remove their grief. In the mean time a bee came there. The Gopīs, lost in thought of Krishṇa and his pastimes, took him to be the emissary of Krishṇa and accused him of ungrateful behaviour. Uddhava seeing the plight of the Gopīs, read out Krishṇa's message to them, "My dear Gopīs, please know that separation between ourselves is impossible at any time at any place or under any circumstances, because I am all-pervading." Uddhava spent considerable time in Vraja and he praised the unflinching devotion of the Gopīs to Krishṇa. He prayed that he would like to be honoured by the dust of the lotus-feet of the Gopīs.

It was time now for Uddhava to come back to Mathura. He took leave of Nanda and Yaśodā and also of the Gopīs,who remembered Krishṇa, with tears rolling down from the eyes (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs. 46 and 47).

After the slaying of Kamsa, Krishṇa paid a visit to the house of Kubjā and Akrūra, according to his former promises. Both of them were very much delighted at the visit of the Lord to their houses.

Kamsa had two wives, viz. Asti and Prāpti, and both of them were daughters of King Jarāsandha of Magadha. On Kamsa's death, his wives went to their father's house and reported everything to him. To avenge the death of his son-in-law, i.e. Kamsa, Jarāsandha attacked Mathurā with a large army. Krishṇa and Balārāma came out on their divine cars to meet the challenge of Jarāsandha. Krishṇa with his *Śārṅga dhanus* caused a havoc to Jarāsandha's army. Balarāma also with his mace destroyed numberless soldiers of the enemy (figs. 180-182). Jarāsandha, being completely defeated, had to go back to Magadha disappointed and Krishṇa and Balarāma entered Mathura victorious and they were received with great honour by the citizens. Jarāsandha attacked Mathura many more times in quick succession but every time he was defeated. When the eighteenth encounter was to take place, Jarāsandha's ally, Kāla Yavana attacked Mathura. In order to save his kinsmen Krishṇa built a fort in Dvārakā and transferred the citizens of Mathura there. Now he was ready to face the challenge of Kāla Yavana but instead of fighting straight with him Krishṇa went out of the city and fled away from his adversary. Kāla Yavana also pursued him. While flying, Krishṇa entered a mountain cave. Kāla Yavana also followed him into the cave but he found there a man sleeping inside. Presuming him to be Krishṇa, Kāla Yavana kicked him with his feet. The person who was sleeping there was not Krishṇa but Muchukunda, son of the illustrious Māndhātā of the Ikshvāku family. When Kāla Yavana kicked Muchukunda, a blazing fire emanated from his body and burnt Kāla Yavana to ashes. Krishṇa then appeared before Muchukunda and the latter recognised him as Nārāyaṇa, bowed down to him and chanted hymns in his praise (figs. 183 and 184.)[18]

Krishṇa then returned to Mathura and annihilated the Yavana army that besieged the city and left for Dvārakā. On the way, Jarāsandha with a vast army followed him. Proceeding hastily, Krishṇa and Balarāma climbed the Gomantaka mountain. As Jarāsandha could not find them, he set fire to the mountain. Krishṇa and Balarāma climbed down from the mountain and fought with Jarāsandha (figs. 185 and 186). This time also Jarāsandha was defeated and he had to go back to Magadha. After this incident, Balarāma married Revatī, the daughter of Raivata.

The *Harivaṁśa* states that shortly after their fight with Jarāsandha near the Gomantaka mountain, Krishṇa and Balarāma returned to Mathura where they came to know of Rukmiṇī's *Svayaṁvara*. Hearing this, Krishṇa, accompanied by a large army, arrived at Kuṇḍinapura, the city of Bhīshmaka, father of Rukmiṇī. Other kings, such as Jarāsandha and his allies who wanted that Śiśupāla should marry Rukmiṇī also camped on the outskirts of the city of Kuṇḍinapura. As Krishṇa remembered Garuḍa, he at once came before him. With Garuḍa and his own men he entered the city of Kuṇḍinapura. Bhīshmaka received Krishṇa with great honour (fig. 188) (*Harivaṁśa, Vishṇu Parva, Ch.* 44, vv 43 and 44).

The arrival of Krishṇa at Kuṇḍinapura perturbed the minds of Jarāsandha and other kings who were on the side of Śiśupāla. They consulted each other and came to Bhīshmaka's court. Jarāsandha and Sunītha described the

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The Gopis expressing their pangs of separation to Uddhava, Mewar, 1625-1650, National Museum, New Delhi.

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great prowess of Śrī Krishṇa as an incarnation of Vishṇu with his Vāhana, Garuḍa. Dantavaktra also paid homage to Krishṇa saying that he was Purushottama, and not an ordinary mortal. He was Vishṇu himself. He is neither hard nor weak, he is never afflicted by disease and miseries. He is always busy removing the sorrows of his devotees who have surrendered to him. He is the god of gods (*Ibid.*, Ch. 49, v. 20). While endorsing the views of Jārāsandha, Sunītha and Dantavaktra, Śālva said that it would be a cowardice not to fight with Krishṇa. Bhīshmaka, knowing his son Rukmī's hostility towards Krishṇa, kept quiet.

Śrī Krishṇa was never anointed king (as is well known, Ugrasena was made king of the Vrishṇis, Bhojas and Andhakas). The question arose as to how Krishṇa would sit on a throne as the other kings on the occasion of the *Svayaṁvara* ceremony. The kings, Kratha and Kaisika of Vidharbha were devotees of Krishṇa; and they offered their kingdom to him and anointed him as a formal king (fig. 187) to enable him to sit along with other princes who assembled on the occasion (*Harivaṁśa*, Chs. 90ff). It is said that Indra sent a throne to anoint Krishṇa as it was not appropriate for the Lord to sit on a throne used by any other king. Thereafter, king Bhīshmaka met Śrī Krishṇa and expressed his regrets for his son's enmity to him. Bhīshmaka said that his dauthter Rukmiṇī should select according to her own choice a prince as her husband without the *Svayaṁvara* ceremony. Krishṇa advised that Bhīshmaka should select Rukmiṇī's groom. He said that she was an incarnation of Lakshmī and he came there only to see her and not with a view to winning her as her spouse. Bhīshmaka offered Krishṇa many presents when the latter left Vidarbhanagara. Others also went back to their kingdoms.

When Rukmiṇī heard that the *Svayaṁvara* was postponed, she said to her friend that she would not choose anybody as her husband except Śrī Krishṇa. Her brother, Rukmī, however, declared that she should be married to his friend Śiśupāla, to aid whom Jarāsandha and his allies came to Vidarbha.

The *Bhāgavata* (Ch.X. 52) states that Rukmiṇī sent a letter though a Brāhmaṇa to Krishṇa in Dvārakā (fig. 189) requesting him to come and accept her as his wife. Knowing Rukmiṇī's love for him he hurried to Kuṇḍinapura to fulfil her wish.

Before the auspicious ceremony started, Rukmiṇī, according to the family custom, came to worship the goddess Ambikā, in the company of her mother and friends. As she, with her mind concentrated on Govinda, proceeded to worship the goddess, the wives of the Brāhmaṇas made her chant the eulogy of the divine Bhava with Bhavānī. She prayed that Krishṇa should be her husband. When Rukmiṇī came out of the temple, all the princes who came to attend the *Svayaṁvara-sabhā*, seeing her faultless beauty, looked eagerly on her. She was, however, looking at Krishṇa. While she was passing by Krishṇa's car (with Garuḍa emblem), Krishṇa carried her away (fig. 190) as a lion takes away a jackal and proceeded towards Dvārakā. All the other princess pursued Krishṇa and Rukmiṇī was assailed with fear. The Yādava army inflicted a crushing defeat on them. Śiśupāla was consoled by his friends and he returned to his city with his followers. Rukmī being unable to tolerate the Rākshasa form of marriage of her sister pursued Krishṇa with a large array of soldiers, But Krishṇa baffled them (fig. 191). Rukmī got down from his chariot and rushed to Krishṇa with a sword. Krishṇa cut off Rukmī's sword into pieces and took up a terrible arrow to kill him. Rukmiṇī, overwhelmed with fear, fell at his feet and requested Krishṇa to spare her brother's life. But Krishṇa bound Rukmī with a piece of cloth and cut off half the portion of the hair of Rukmi's head and beard with a sharp sword and disfigured Rukmī. Balarāma did not approve of the act of Krishṇa and asked him to let off Rukmī. Rukmī considered it to be a great insult and took a vow that till he did not defeat Krishṇa, he would not return to Kuṇḍinapura and went to Bhojakaṭaka and settled there.

When Krishṇa reached Dvārakā, great fesitvities took place on the occasion of his marriage with Rukmiṇī. The city was beautifully decorated and the people were all delighted.

In the course of time a son, called Pradyumna was born to Krishṇa and Rukmiṇī. Pradyumna was an incarnation of Kāmadeva. When he was only ten days old he was stolen by the demon Samvara. The demon threw him into the ocean and he was devoured by a fish. The fish was caught by a fisherman and it was presented to Samvara. The cooks while cutting the fish found a wonderful boy and gave him to Māyāvatī.

Nārada told all about the boy to Māyāvatī. Considering this boy as Kāmadeva she cherished great love for him. As Pradyumna grew, he became very charming. Māyāvatī told Pradyumna all about their past lives and Pradyumna understood that in his last birth he was Kāmadeva, and Māyāvati, i.e. Rati, was his spouse. Pradyumna killed Śamvara in a battle and went to Dvārakā with her. Nārada suddenly appeared there and revealed all the mysteries about Pradyumna to Krishṇa. Rukmiṇī was very happy to get Pradyumna back (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 55).

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King Satrājit was a great devotee of the sun. The sun gave him a brilliant jewel to his devotee. Wearing the jewel he acquired a great effulgence and the matter was reported to Krishṇa. This jewel had great virtues inasmuch as it kept one free from famine, premature death, inauspiciousness, serpents, and other calamities including diseases.

Krishṇa asked Satrājit to present the jewel to Ugrasena. But he refused to do so and gave it to his brother Prasena. One day Prasena, wearing the jewel, went out on hunting. A lion killed him and took away the jewel into a mountain cave. Jāmbavān killed the lion, got the jewel and gave it to his children as a plaything.

When Prasena did not return from the forest, Satrājit thought that Krishṇa had killed him and taken away the jewel. The people, hearing of this, began to doubt the character of Krishṇa. In order to remove the doubts of the people, Krishṇa accompanied by a large number of people came to the forest and discovered the dead body of Prasena, killed by a lion. Thereafter, they found that the lion was killed by a bear on a mountain. Krishṇa entered into the cave of the mountain and found the jewel being used as a toy of the child of the bear. The nurse of the boy raised an alarm when she found Krishṇa in the cave and Jāmbavān, the king of the bears appeared there. A terrible fight ensued between them and it lasted without a stop for eighteen days. Jāmbavān was ultimately defeated and he realising Krishṇa as the ancient Vishṇu, offered prayers in his honour. Then he offered the jewel and his daughter Jāmbavatī to Krishṇa. Having fulfilled his mission Krishṇa came back to Dvārakā (figs. 192-194).

Krishṇa returned the jewel to Satrājit. He became repentant of his false allegation against Krishṇa. To make up for this, he bestowed his beautiful daughter, Satyabhāmā and the jewel on Krishṇa. Krishṇa accepted the hands of Satyabhāmā but not the jewel.

When Krishṇa and Balarāma were away from Dvārakā, Akrūra and Kritavarmā provoked Śatadhanvā to take away the jewel from Satrājit. Śatadhanvā killed Satrājit and took away the jewel (fig. 195).

Satyabhāmā went to Hastināpura to report the calamity to Krishṇa. Krishṇa and Balarāma resolved upon killing Śatadhanvā for his misdeed. When the latter came to know of it, he gave the jewel to Akrūra and fled away on a horse. Krishṇa and Balarāma followed him and killed him (fig. 196), but did not find the jewel. On return to Dvārakā, Krishṇa informed her of the destruction of Śatadhanvā, but said that the jewel was not found in his possession. On hearing the death of Śatadhanvā Akrūra, and Kritavarmā fled away from Dvārakā.

On Akrūra's departure with the jewel from Dvārakā, the city was visited by many calamities. From this Krishṇa understood that the jewel must be with Akrūra, and called him back to Dvārakā. Questioned about the jewel Akrūra admitted that he was in the possession of the jewel and gave it to Krishṇa (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs. 56 and 57).

In addition to Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā (fig. 197) and Jāmbavatī, Krishṇa married five other wives, namely Kālindī, the daughter of the sun-god, Mitrabindā, sister of the kings of Avantī, Binda and Anubinda, Satyā, the daughter of the king of Ayodhyā, Bhadrā the princess of Kekayas, and Lakshaṇā, the daughter of the Madra king (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 58).

Naraka, also called Bhaumāsura (being the son of Bhūmi, i.e. earth) became very powerful. He stole the ear-rings of Indra's mother Aditi.

Naraka lived in Prāgjyotishapura, impregnable with fortresses of mountain, weapons, water, fire and wind. It was also surrounded by the various hard and dreadful nooses of the demon Mura. Krishṇa came to Naraka's city with Satyabhāmā on Garuḍa and "shattered down the mountains with the stroke of his mace, the weapons with his shafts, and the fire, water, wind and the nooses of Mura, with his discus (fig. 198) (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 59).

Hearing the sound of Pāñchajanya, Mura arose from the waters and rushed to Krishṇa. In the fight that ensued, Krishṇa killed Mura with his *chakra*.

Now Naraka appeared in the field and afflicted Krishṇa with various shafts. Krishṇa first killed Naraka's soldiers and then with his discus sundered the head of Naraka (fig. 199). Naraka's mother approached Śrī Krishṇa, and gave back the excellent rings of Aditi. Thereafter, Śrī Krishṇa entered the personal apartments of Naraka and released sixteen thousand and one ladies who were imprisoned by Naraka. These ladies were captivated by Krishṇa's beauty and as desired by them, he married them. Krishṇa with his two strong hands uprooted the Maṇiparvata, the abode where Naraka kept the 16,001 damsels, placed it on Garuḍa and left for Dvārakā (*Harivaṁśa*, *Vishṇu Parva*, Ch. 64, vv. 21, 43 and 44; fig. 200). Thereafter Krishṇa went with Aditi's ear-rings to heaven and gave them to Aditi.

The *Harivaṁśa* gives a detailed account of the *Pārijātaharaṇa* story. It is said that Rukmiṇi kept a vow and performed the necessary

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ceremonies on the Raivataka mountain. Krishṇa himself superintended the arrangements of the ceremonies, and all his wives and relatives were present on the occasion. At that moment came the divine sage Nārada with a Pārijāta flower (Pārijāta is a heavenly tree in the garden of Indra). The sage gave it to Krishṇa and Krishṇa in his turn to Rukmiṇī. This aroused jealously in the mind of Satyabhāmā, Krishṇa's youthful and beautiful queen whom Krishṇa loved most. This flower has many virtues. Further, one who wears it can avert hunger, thirst, old age and sufferings.

As Satyabhāmā's heart was burning with jealousy, she lost her cheerfulness and grace. In anger, she remained inside her own apartment, removing her ornaments.

Having come to know of Satyabhāmā's condition Krishṇa came to console her. Satyabhāmā reminded that Krishṇa openly declared her to be his most favourite queen, but the fact that he gave the heavenly Pārijāta to Rukmiṇī belied the truth of his statement. To prove his highest love for Satyabhāmā, Krishṇa assured her that he would bring the Pārijāta tree itself from Indra's garden and plant it in her courtyard (fig. 201). This satisfied her. Krishṇa, accompanied by Sātyaki, left on Garuḍa for Indra's heaven. His son Pradyumna also followed him on another celestial car. They reached Indra's heaven and uprooted the Pārijāta tree by force and placed it on Garuḍa (as Indra refused to part with it which was very favourite to his wife Śachī). The guards of Indra's garden informed him of what had happened. He followed by Jayanta arrived at the spot on Airāvata and then ensued a terrible fight between him and Krishṇa (figs. 202 and 203). Indra pierced Garuḍa with a shaft while Krishṇa struck Airāvata with his arrow as hard as *Varja*. On the other side Jayanta (son of Indra) and Pradyumna (son of Krishṇa) were fighting each other for the possession of Pārijāta. Again, a powerful angel called Pravara was trying to take away the Pārijāta from Garuḍa's back. As advised by Krishṇa, Sātyaki engaged Pravara in a fight.

Garuḍa wounded Airāvata so much that it fell down from the heaven on the Pāriyātra mountain. To save the elephant, Indra also went there. Krishṇa riding Garuḍa pursued Indra. Indra and Krishṇa fought there also but Krishṇa remained victorious. Suddenly he rose into the sky with Garuḍa carrying the Pārijāta. From there he commissioned Dāruka who came with his chariot. Next day again the battle started between Indra and Krishṇa, aided by their own followers. The battle was so fierce that the mountains trembled and fell down on earth. There were thunders and men on earth become unconscious. Seeing this condition, Kāśyapa and Aditi came to the battle scene and they advised the cessation of the battle and Aditi allowed Krishṇa to take the Pārijāta tree for Satyabhāmā. After reaching Dvārakā, Krishṇa planted the tree in Satyabhāmā's court (fig. 204). There was a great festivity on the occasion (fig. 205).

After that Satyabhāmā arranged to perform the *Puṇyaka-vrata* ceremony. At Krishṇa's desire, Nārada came there. He was received with great honour and worshipped. Satyabhāmā placed a garland of flowers around Krishṇa's neck and bound him to the Pārijāta tree and made a gift of him to Nārada (fig. 206). As *dakshiṇā*, she gave to Nārada a thousand cows, and a pile of gold and also many other things. After some time, Nārada released Krishṇa and the ceremony came to an end (*Harivaṁśa, Vishṇu Parva*, Chs. 65-75).

As stated in the *Harivaṁśa*, the city of Shaṭpura was the abode of many powerful demons. There lived in Shaṭpura a Brāhmaṇa named Brahmadatta. He was a classmate and friend and also priest of Vasudeva (Krishṇa's father).

This Brahmadatta started a sacrifice to last for one year. The demons of Shaṭpura of which Nikumbha was the foremost came to the Brāhmaṇa and demanded the right to have a share of the soma-drinks in the sacrifice and also wanted that the beautiful daughters of his (about five hundred in number) should be given in marriage to them. As he refused to comply with the demands of the demons, the latter became angry and destroyed the sacrifice, and took away his daughters.

Vasudeva and others who were present in the sacrifice mentally remembered Krishṇa. Krishṇa who was aware of the situation asked his son Pradyumna to hurry to Shaṭpura to save Brahmadatta's daughters. Pradyumna on his arrival in Shaṭpura created illusion and rescued Brahmadatta's daughters. Simultaneously with his magic powers he created false girls of the same appearance and number and left them in the charge of the Asuras.

Now the sacrifice started again and to attened it came many such kings as Jarāsandha, Dantavaktra, Dhritarāshṭra, Mālavas, Rukmī, Binda, Anubinda, Śalya, Śakuni and others. In the mean time Krishṇa arrived there with a large army. He employed the Pāṇḍavas to protect the sacrifice, Pradyumna to be in charge of the soldiers and stationed Jayanta and Pravara in the sky. Then he started a fight against the Asuras of whom Nikumbha was the first to accept the challenge. The Asuras were aided by Duryodhana, Śiśupāla and many others. Nikumbha created Māyā

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(illusion), defeated Anādhrishṭi (of the Yādava army) and imprisoned him in a cave. He did the same in the case of Kritavarmā, Chārudeshṇa and many other Yādava heroes. Pradyumana, Sāmba and Aniruddha, however, gave a brave fight (fig. 207). Krishṇa threw his powerful shafts on the Asuras and killed them in large numbers. The Yādava heroes achieved success in defeating the Kshatriya kings who sided with the demons. The Asuras were then completely routed. Nikumbha retreated to the Shaṭapura cave but he was followed by Krishṇa. There took place a terrible fight between Krishṇa and Nikumbha (fig. 208). On the other side Pradyumna released the Yādava heroes who were defeated and imprisoned by Nikumbha. Nikumbha struck Krishṇa with an iron-club and Krishṇa on his part hit him with his mace, and then he severed the head of the Asura with his *chakra* (figs. 209-211). Thereafter, he met the Pāṇḍavas, Yādavas and others, and having saluted his parents and Brahmadatta left for Dvārakā (figs. 212-214) (*Hariaṁvśa, Vishṇu Parva*, Chs. 84 and 85).

Bāṇāśura was a son of Bali. He was endowed with a thousand arms and was a great devotee of Śiva. Bāṇa had a beautiful daughter, called Ushā. She saw Aniruddha (grandson of Krishṇa) in her dream and fell in love with him (fig. 215). She had a friend in Chitralekhā, daughter of Kushmāṇḍa, the minister of Bāṇa. She told everything to Chitralekhā.

At Ushā's behest Chitralekhā who was conversant with Yoga went flying through the sky to Dvārakā and brought Aniruddha to Ushā's apartment. Ushā enjoyed Aniruddha's company without the knowledge of anybody except that of Chitralekhā (fig. 216).

Once the guards to Ushā's apartment marked signs of youthful enjoyment on the person of Ushā and reported the matter to Bāṇa. Bāṇa came to her abode and found Aniruddha there. Bāṇa was enraged at this and ordered his soldiers to fight with the stranger (i.e. Aniruddha). But Aniruddha valiantly fought against them alone and defeated them (fig. 217). Then Bāṇa himself appeared on the scene and bound him with the noose of serpents. This news distressed Ushā very much.

Nārada informed Krishṇa of the whole situation. So, accompanied by Pradyumna, Gada, Sāmba, Saraṇa, Nanda, Upānanda and many others, he came to Śoṇitapura, the city of Bāṇa and besieged it. Bāṇa came out with a large army to fight them (fig. 218). In order to help his devotee, Śiva on his bull in the company of his son (Kārttikeya) and the ghosts and goblins came to fight with Krishṇa and Balarāma. Śiva lost the battle to Krishṇa. Thereupon Krishṇa with the help of his Śārṅga bow and sharp arrow destroyed Śaṅkara's host consisting of the ghosts, the Pramathas, Guhyakas, Dākiṇīs, Jātudhānas, Vetālas, Bināyakas, Bhūtas, Mātris, Piśāchas, Kumbhāṇḍas and Brahma Rākshasas. Seeing this Bāṇa attacked Śrī Krishṇa. He discharged powerful shafts against him, but he (Krishṇa) destroyed all of them. He destroyed Bāṇa's chariot and killed its driver and horses and blew his conch.

In the mean time, Bāṇa's mother, Koṭavī Devī, appeared nude before Krishṇa, who turned his face to the other side. Two ghosts Triśirā and Tripatā came to fight on behalf of Bāṇa. Beholding these fevers of Śiva, Krishṇa created Śīta fever to counteract the influence of Śiva's fevers. Śiva's fevers were defeated and fled away.

At the last Bāṇa came with various weapons to fight Krishṇa. But Krishṇa with his discus cut off all the hands of Bāṇa, but at the request of Śiva, spared his life (figs. 219-224). Bāṇa brought both Ushā and Aniruddha in a chariot and Krishṇa departed with them for Dvārakā. (*Bhāgavata*, X. Chs 62 and 63).[10]

Once the Yādava princes, while sporting, went to a well to drink water. The well was dry and they found in it a huge lizard. The matter was reported to Krishṇa. When Krishṇa came and touched the lizard, it assumed the form of a celestial being, and bowed down to Krishṇa. He disclosed his identity as the Ikshvāku king Nriga, who assumed the form of a lizard as the result of the curse of a Brāhmaṇa. Thus Nriga was released of the curse by Krishṇa.

Pauṇḍraka, king of Karusha, was a vainglorious person. He considered himself to be the real Vāsudeva and claimed his insignia. Pauṇḍraka, out of foolishness, sent a messenger to Dvārakā asking Krishṇa to renounce his epithet, Vāsudeva and all his marks. "Enraged at this Krishṇa set out on an expedition against Pauṇḍraka who was helped by his friend, king of Kāśī." Krishṇa with his mace and sword, discus and shafts destroyed the combined armies of Pauṇḍraka and Kāśī-rāja. He cut off the heads of Pauṇḍraka and Kāśī-rāja with his discus. In order to avenge the death of Kāśī-rāja, his son prayed to Śiva. At Śiva's behest arose fom the sacrificial altar a dreadful figure, as if vomitting fire, and it approached Dvārakā, but it was thwarted by Krishṇa's Śudarśana. That dreadful fire went back to Kāśī and destroyed the city (*Bhāgavata*, X. Ch. 66).

This is but a brief outline of Krishṇa's life as portrayed in the *Purāṇas* and the *Harivamśa*. Next follows the description of Krishṇa's later life of which the *Mahābhārata* is the chief source. As Tadpatrikar has pointed out

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some incidents of Krishṇa's early life, as depicted in the *Purāṇās* find place in the *Mahābhārata*, as for example, Krishṇa referring to Kamas's death as the cause of the enmity between him and Jarāsandha (II. 19), Śiśupāla's depreciation of Krishṇa (II. 40.23), Krishṇa mentioning the evil deeds of Śiśupāla and his desire for Rukmiṇī (II. 68.15-22), Vidura referring to Kamsa's death (II. 83.8), Draupadī praying to Krishṇa, describing him as Gopījanapriya, when she was being disrobed in the Kurusabhā (II. 90.43-49), Krishṇa relating his encounter with Śālva (III, 15-22), Sañjaya referring to Rukmiṇī-haraṇa, killing of Dantavaktra, the burning of Kāśī, the killing of Kamsa, etc. (V. 48.74 ff), Vidura enumerating the deeds of Krishṇa, relating to Dvivida, Naraka, Pūtanā, Govardhana, Arishṭa, Dhenuka, Chāṇūra, Keśī, Kamsa, Jarāsandha, Baka, Śiśupāla, Bāṇa, Pārijāta, etc. (V. 130. 55-67), Dhritarāshṭra referring to Krishṇa's childhood feats (VII. 2. 1-26), Duryodhana disparaging Krishṇa as Kamsa-*dāsaśya dāyāda* (IX. 62.26), the account of Nriga, the death of Kamsa, Keśī and others (XII. 348), etc. (Please see, S. N. Tadpatrikar, "The Krishṇa Problem," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona, Vol. X, April, 1929, parts I-II, pp. 269-344).

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1. BP 181.5-20; VP 1.12-33; PP 272. 12-18; HV 52; BVP 4.2-56; BHP 1.17-19; DBH 18.2-25
2. BP 181.29-32; VP 1.33-65; PP 272.18-25; HV 52-56; BVP 4.56-6.278; BHP 1.20-36; DBH 18.25-19.47; MBH 1.65.54-66.1 and VI. 66.2
3. BP 181.32—182.11; VP 1.65; 3.7; PP 272.25-38; HV. 57-60 BVP 7.1-74; BHP 1.27-3.8; VYP 96.192-202; DHB 20, AP 12.4-6, LP 69.46,48; MBH 1.64.141.145
4. BP 182.12-32, VP.3.8-29, PP 272.39-58; HV 60; BVP 7.75-132; BHP 3.9-4.13; VYP 96.203-210; DBH. 230; 22-48, AP 12.7-13; LP 69.49-61
5. BP 184.39.20; VP 6,8,9; PP 272, 69-74; BVP 9. 42ff; BHP 5.1-18, DBH 25.1-5
6. BP 184.7-21; VP 5.7-23; PP 272.74-82; HV 63, BVP 10, BHP 6.
7. BP.184.22-28, 31-42; VP 6.1-7, 10-20; PP 272.82-85; HV 62,64; BVP 12.1-13; BHP 7-17, 9.10
8. For incidents of Krishṇa's life that happened after the migration to Vrindavana till the killing of Dhenuka, see also BP 184. 42-60; VP. 6.21-51; PP 272.97-99; HV 65,66; BVP 16.147-149; BHP 11.21-40
9. BP 185.1-56; VP 7.1-82; PP 272.128-134; HV 68,69; BVP 19.1-169 BHP 15.47-17.19
10. BP 187.130; VP 9.1-30; PP 272.140-143; HV 71; BVP 16.14-19; BHP 18.17-32
11. BP 187.31-188.49; VP. 10.1-12,56; PP. 272.181-217; HV 72-76; BVP 21; BHP 24-27
12. BP 189.1-45; VP.13; PP.272. 158-180; HV.77; BVP 28-53, BHP.29-33
13. BP 189.46-58; VP 14; PP 272.144-149; HV 78; BVP 16.14-19; BHP 36.1-15
14. BP 190.22-48; VP 16.1-128; PP 149-157; HV 81; BVP 16.20-74; BHP 37.1-125
15. BP 191.1-192.67; VP 17.1-19.9; PP.272.211-330; HV.82.34; BVP 70.1-72.4; BHP 41.1-41.6
16. BP 192. 194.17; VP 19.10-21,17; PP.272.331-293; HV 84-89; BVP 12.15-115; BHP 41-44
17. BP 194.18-22; VP 81.18-31; PP 273.1-5; HV 9; BVP 99-102; BHP 45.26-50
18. BP 195; VP.22; PP 273.6.33; HV. 91-99; BHP 50.1-43, 52.6-14
19. BP 205, 206; VP 32,3; PP 277; HV 175-190; BVP 114-120, BHP 62,63

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KRISHṆA IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

KRISHṆA is first mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* in the sections relating to the *Svyaṁvara* of Draupadī. Her father Drupada, King of Pañchāla, invited the valorous Kshatriyas to attend the function. The Yādavas, headed by Krishṇa and Balarāma, were also present on this occasion. While other princes sought the hand of Draupadī and participated in the archery contest arranged on this occasion, the Yādavas did not take part in it. The Pāṇḍavas came to attend the function, though not invited. During this period they were spending the last year of their exile incognito. So, they attended the ceremony in disguise (in the guise of Brāhmaṇas). While nobody else could recognise them, Krishṇa could. This shows his extraordinary intelligence. He was great not only in physical valour and charm, but was also endowed with the highest mental faculties, wisdom and intelligence. This is the secret of his greatness and success.

When Arjuna successfully hit the target (fig. 225), the other jealous princes, who attended the *Svayaṁvara* but could not perform the feat, attacked Arjuna who was dressed as a Brāhmaṇa. As far as the fight continued, Arjuna had the better of it over the others. The fighting was stopped at the wise counsel of Krishṇa. A terrible situation was avoided without any bloodshed. Krishṇa's greatness was first recognised here in the *Mahābhārata*. Krishṇa reminded the princes that Arjuna had rightfully won the hand of Draupadī. This speaks of krishṇa's great sense of justice which fortunately prevailed over the angry feelings of the princes.

When Draupadī was formally married to the Pāṇḍavas, Krishṇa offered them various gifts consisting of precious jewels, gold ornaments, costly clothes, decorated elephants, horses, chariots, and gold and silver pieces. These gifts enriched the Pāṇḍavas(as they were at that time without any wealth, leading a life of exile) and helped them to settle as householders in a befitting manner. The Pāṇḍavas thereafter were well received by Dhritarāshṭra and they got back half of the kingdom and settled in Indraprastha (*Mahābhārata, Ādi parva*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Chs. 183-198; Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Krishṇa Charitra, Bankim Rachanāvalī*, Calcutta, pp. 494-497).

The episode of the marriage of Subhadrā (Krishṇa's younger sister who was very dear to Krishṇa) (fig. 226) is one of the finest compositions in the *Mahābhārata*, and is an integral part of the original epic. Because of certain reasons Arjuna left Indraprastha and travelled in various parts of India for twelve years and in the course of this pilgrimage he came to Dvārakā where he stayed for several days as Krishṇa's guest. When Arjuna was in Dvārakā, the Yādavas arranged a festival on the Raivataka mountain. All the Yādava heroes and ladies including Subhadrā joined this festival. Subhadrā was young and beautiful and Arjuna was enamoured of her. This did not escape the eye of Krishṇa, and he told Arjuna smilingly, "You are leading the life of a pilgrim but still struck by the arrows of Cupid (love)." Arjuna admitted his weakness and Krishṇa advised him to take away Subhadrā by force according to the established practice of marriage followed by the Kshatriyas. Following Krishṇa's advice, Arjuna went towards Dvārakā and by force placed Subhadrā on his chariot, and left for Indraprastha. Though Arjuna was the most suitable groom for Subhadrā, his action enraged Balarāma and other Yādavas. But everything went happily through Krishṇa's intervention (*Mahābhārata, Ādi parva*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Chs. 218-223; Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 498-504).

The next episode in which Krishṇa plays an important role is the Khāṇḍava-dāha, i.e. the burning of the forest of Khāṇḍava near Khāṇḍavaprastha (fig. 227). The story is like this: Near the Khāṇḍavaprastha, the capital of the Pāṇḍavas, there was a forest called Khāṇḍava forest, and there was in ancient times a king called Śvetakī, who was fond of performing sacrifices frequently, and all the sacrificial Brāhmaṇas were tired of performing his sacrifices. When the Brāhmaṇas refused to perform any more sacrifices, he went to Rudra for help. Advised by Rudra, Durvāsas began a twelve-year sacrifice for the king. Agni was overfed with butter and he lost all his physical well-being. He went to Brahmā for relief. Brahmā told him (Agni) to devour the Khāṇḍava forest. This forest was, however, protected by Indra. So Agni at Brahmā's advice, approached Krishṇa and Arjuna. Agni

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was as tall as the *Śāla* tree, he had the brilliance of heated gold, and was tawny in colour and endowed with a flowing beard.

Rājā Soma offered quivers, a bow and *Kapidhvaja* chariot to Varuṇa. Agni called upon Varuṇa and asked him to offer these weapons to Arjuna to help him to burn the Khāṇḍava forest, to kill the birds and beasts residing therein. When Khāṇḍava was on fire, Maya, who was a great architect of the demons was there, and sought their refuge and his life was spared by Arjuna and Krishṇa. In return, Maya asked Arjuna if he could render any services to him. But Arjuna asked for no return. This is a great example of *nishkāma karma* on the part of Arjuna, i.e. to do a work without desiring a fruit. But when Maya was insistent on doing something in return, Arjuna sent him to Krishṇa and the latter asked him to build an assembly hall for Yudhishṭhira. This hall was so excellently built that Duryodhana felt jealous of the Pāṇḍavas and the seed of the *Mahābhārata* battle was sown here (*Mahābhārata*, *Ādi Parva*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Chs. 221-233; Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 504-506).

When Maya finished the construction of the *Sabhā*, Yudhishṭhira was advised by many to perform the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. Though his brothers, the family priest Dhaumya and even Vyāsa declared him fit to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice, Yudhishṭhira thought it proper to ask for the advice of Krishṇa who was the best of all, free from all faults, was most truthful, all-knowing, and capable of performing all acts, free from all attachments and anger (this is how Yudhishṭhira describes him). Krishṇa arrived at Khāṇḍavaprastha at Yudhishṭhira's invitation but said that till Jarāsandha was alive, Yudhishṭhira was not fit to perform the sacrifice. The reason was that Jarāsandha was a *Samrāṭ*, and had taken a vow that he would perform the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. With a view to that, he conquered eighty-six kings and kept them as prisoners. He was to conquer another fourteen kings and then sacrifice all these one hundred princes at the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. As this would be a cruel act, Krishṇa thought that he should be challenged in a fight and defeated and all the princes should be released. This advice he gave from his sincere desire to Yudhishṭhira to see that the wrongly captivated kings should not be put to death. Yudhishṭhira accepted this counsel and Bhīma, Arjuna and Krishṇa set out to vanquish Jarāsandha.

Arjuna and Bhīma accompanied by Krishṇa came in the guise of Brāhmaṇas to Jarāsandha. When they met Jarāsandha, Bhīma and Arjuna observed silence. Krishṇa alone spoke to Jarāsandha: "These two, who are with me, are under a vow to keep silence now, we shall speak to you when the first half of the night is over." Jarāsandha came at the dead of the night to see Bhīma, Arjuna and Krishṇa in his sacrificial hall. Krishṇa then disclosed their identity and the purpose for which they had come. Krishṇa said that Jarāsandha had committed great sins by wrongfully confining the kings he had conquered, and if this was tolerated, they (Krishṇa and the Pāṇḍavas) also would be equally guilty of these sins. This implies a great truth. One may not commit an unrighteous act, but if one does not oppose the unrighteous act of others, though not affected by them, one is equally guilty. Krishṇa was more an upholder of *dharma* than its propounder.

Krishṇa gave Jarāsandha the choice to fight with any one of them (i.e. Bhīma or Arjuna or Krishṇa) but Jarāsandha chose Bhīma as his opponent. The fight (fig. 228) continued for fourteen days. At the instance of Krishṇa, Bhīma tore him into two pieces (fig. 229). Jarāsandha having been killed, Krishṇa released all the imprisoned rulers, all of whom promised to help Yudhishṭhira in his *Rājasūya* sacrifice. Jarāsandha's son, Sahadeva was placed on the throne of Magadha by Krishṇa. Sahadeva offered Krishṇa a large number of valuable presents which Krishṇa accepted and gave to Yudhishṭhira.

The death of Jarāsandha was a great feat performed by Bhīma; but it was possible on account of Krishṇa's counsel. This event had a double effect: Firstly, it removed the greatest foe who was capable of challenging Yudhishṭhira; secondly, the presents offered by Sahadeva enriched Yudhishṭhira's coffers. After the death of Jarāsandha Yudhishṭhira began preparations for the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva set out on *digvijaya* (conquest). They conquered many countries and returned home with much wealth (*Mahābhārata*, *Sabhā Parva*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Chs. 13-35).

At the *Rājasūya* Sacrifice arranged by Yudhishṭhira, Bhīshma asked Yudhishṭhira to offer the worship first to Krishṇa. While this was approved by other kings, Śiśupāla became displeased and out of anger hurled many abuses on Krishṇa. Though displeased, Krishṇa remained patient, characteristic of his greatness. Yudhishṭhira tried to dissuade Śiśupāla from such an unrighteous act. Bhīshma, however, declared that one who would not like Krishṇa to be worshipped first is not fit to be assuaged at all. Bhīshma advanced the following arguments to bring out Krishṇa's greatness. He said, "There is not a single monarch in this assembly who has not been vanquished by Krishṇa. He is not only the vanquisher of the Kshatriyas, he is the sole resort of this universe." Even if one looks upon him as a man, he is the best and most powerful of men. He is the repository of the

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Vedic knowledge. This wonderful combination of the highest physical prowess and highest Vedic knowledge is not to be found in anybody else. The greatest evidence of Krishṇa's supreme Vedic knowledge is the *Gītā*. Whoever may be the composer of the present *Gītā*, there is no doubt, that it is a compilation of Krishṇa's teachings.

Śiśupāla had a supporter in another king called Sunītha. Again, he abused Krishṇa as 'Gopāla' and 'Dāsa'. Sahadeva became enraged and said, "I place my feet on the head of the kings who donot respect Keśava, the killer of Keśī."

Krishṇa, however, excused Śiśupāla for his abuses. Krishṇa was not only endowed with prowess, but he was also forgiving.

Śiśupāla and Krishṇa were in fact cousins, Śiśupāla's mother being Krishṇa's aunt. Śiśupāla was born with four hands and three eyes; but when Krishṇa took him in his lap, Śiśupāla's extra hands and eyes disappeared and Śiśupāla became a normal child. There was a prediction that one on whose lap Śiśupāla would drop down his physical peculiarities will kill Śiśupāla. But his mother requested Krishṇa not to kill Śiśupāla. Krishṇa agreed to forgive Śiśupāla one hundred acts of misdemeanour.

Regarding Śiśupāla's atrocities it may be stated that when Krishṇa went to Prāgjyotishapura, Śiśupāla set fire to Dvārakā. Once when Bhojarāja went to the Raivataka mountain, Śiśupāla came and killed many people of Dvārakā. He also stole the Aśvamedha horse of Vasudeva (Krishṇa's father). But all this personal reasons did not weigh with him (Krishṇa). If he was against Śiśupāla, the main reason was that the latter acted against the well-being of the society. When Śiśupāla exceeded all limits of propriety, Krishṇa killed him with his *chakra* at the time of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice (figs. 230-233).

After the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, Krishṇa took leave of the Pāṇḍavas (fig. 234) and went back to Dvārakā (*Ibid.*, Chs. 36-45). Here on the other side, Duryodhana, seeing the wonderful assembly hall of Yudhishṭhira and his great prosperity, became unhappy in mind and he discussed with Śakuni as to how to deprive Yudhishṭhira of his property. As instructed by his maternal uncle, Śakuni, Duryodhana invited Yudhishṭhira to a game of dice, knowing fully well that the latter, though excessively fond of the game, was not expert in it. Vidura advised both Duryodhana and Dhritarāshṭra to stop the dice-playing which was sure to cause evil to both the sides. But Dhritarāshṭra did not listen to it. Rather, he asked Vidura to go to Khāṇḍavaprastha to bring Yudhishṭhira to Hastināpura.

Dhritarāshṭra got built a beautiful assembly hall where Yudhishṭhira was invited to play the game of dice. Śakuni played on behalf of Duryodhana and defeated Yudhishṭhira by unfair means. Yudhishṭhira lost the game with his brothers and Draupadī as stake. Draupadī was brought to the assembly hall and was insulted. Duḥśāsana went to the extent of stripping Draupadī of her clothes in the open court. When nobody in the *Sabhā* came to her rescue (her husbands were powerless as they had lost indpendent action, being defeated in the game, as was the custom then), Draupadī remembered Krishṇa in her mind.

As she prayed, Krishṇa, who was the embodiment of *dharma*, supplied, though unseen, innumerable beautiful clothes with which to cover the body of Draupadī (*Ibid.*, Ch. 48).

Everybody was surprised at this. Dhritarāshṭra was at last convinced of the impropriety of the whole situation and he gave the Pāṇḍavas liberty to return to Indraprastha with Draupadī. But at the instigation of Śakuni Yudhishṭhira was again invited to play. He lost the game this time also along with his kingdom. He was exiled for thirteen years, out of which he and his brothers along with Draupadī were to spend one year incognito.

Yudhishṭhira, accompanied by his brothers, Draupadī and the Brāhmaṇas, proceeded from the bank of the Gaṅgā to Kurukshetra. As they proceeded, they took their bath in the Sarasvatī, Drishadvatī and Yamunā and went towards the west. And, at last, they reached the Kāmyakavana near the Marusthala on the bank of the river Sarasvatī. In the forest, they were visited by Vidura, the wise minister of Dhritarāshṭra, and some of their friends and well-wishers, including the Bhojas, Andhakas and the Vrishṇis along with Krishṇa. When Krishṇa heard of what had happened as a consequence of the *Dyūtakrīḍā*, he burst into anger and assured Yudhishṭhira of Duryodhana's doom in near future. Arjuna, who was his great devotee, praised Krishṇa's various deeds both in this and previous lives.

Draupadī also praised Krishṇa as the sole resort of the whole universe, the gods and men, and narrated her sufferings in the *Kurusabhā*. Krishṇa consoled her and said that very soon Duryodhana and the others who had caused her sufferings would be killed, and the Pāṇḍavas would enjoy sovereignty.

Krishṇa said to Yudhishṭhira, 'O king, if I were present at the time of the dice-playing, this situation would not have arisen. I would have stopped the game. Women, dice, hunting and wine deprive one of one's good fortunes and grace'. "I had been to Ānarta

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to fight Śālva, and destroy his city called Saubha. When you were engaged in the *Rājasūya* sacrifice, I killed Śiśupāla, which enraged his supporter, the Saubha king, Śālva and he attacked Dvārakā in my absence. He killed many a young Yādava and asked for my whereabouts. As I was not in Dvārakā, Chārudeshṇa, Sāmba, Pradyumna and others fought Śālva. There was a fierce fight between Śālva and Pradyumna. Śālva retired from the fight for the time being as he was destined to be killed by me." (P. C. Roy, *Mahābhārata*, English translation, *Vana Parva*, Chs. XIV-XXI).

Śālva was a great fighter and his city was a magical one and it could move in the air according to its wish. Krishṇa conquered the Suabha city as Mahādeva had conquered the Tripura city. Krishṇa's *chakra* cut Śālava into two pieces. After narrating his victory over Śālva, and wishing Yudhishṭhira and others their welfare, Krishṇa left for Dvārakā along with Subhadrā and Abhimanyu.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (X. Chs. 81 and 82) describes two incidents of Krishṇa's life, which seem to have taken place after Krishṇa's encounter with Śālva. These two incindents, namely, Krishṇa's meeting his Brāhmaṇa friend, Sudāmā and the Gopas and Gopīs at Kurukshetra, very popular with the artists, and are narrated below:

Śrī Krishṇa had a Brāhmaṇa friend called, Śrīdāma or Sudāmā. They read together in the school of Sāndīpani. Sudāmā became well-versed in the Vedic learning, but he was poor. He and his wife led a very miserable existence. One day his wife, being unable to bear the miseries of poverty any longer, told him to go to Śrī Krishṇa at Dvārakā and ask for riches from him who is the lord of the universe and fond of his devotees. Though poor beyond description, Sudāmā had no desire for riches as his mind was free from worldly attachment. But after his wife's repeated exhortations, he left for Dvārakā with a handful of rice as gift for Krishṇa.

When Krishṇa saw Sudāmā coming, he rose from the bed and came near the entrance and delightfully embraced the Brāhmaṇa (figs. 236 and 237). Krishṇa was so pleased to see his Brāhmaṇa friend that the tears of joy began to flow from his eyes. He placed him on his own bed and washed his feet with water. He gave him heavenly perfumes, sandal, paste and saffron. Rukmiṇī herself with her maids began to fan him. Everybody was struck with the courtesies shown by Krishṇa to the Brāhmaṇa

Krishṇa held the hand of Sudāmā and began to talk about the adventures of their boyhood when they had been together in the house of their preceptor, Sāndīpani.

Krishṇa knew the reason of Sudāmā's coming, though Sudāmā, partly out of his non-attachment to wealth and partly out of his shyness did not tell him (Krishṇa) anything about his miserable condition and his wife's desire.

Krishṇa jokingly asked Sudāmā if he had brought any present for him, but out of shyness Sudāmā could not offer him the handful of flattened rice he had brought for Krishṇa.

Krishṇa himself snatched the bundle of flattened rice, tied to the tattered rags of the Brāhmaṇa and took one handful with great delight. Krishṇa said: "whatever is offered to me with devotion is accepted by me with great pleasure."

Sudāmā spent that night in the palace of Krishṇa and was entertained with palatable dishes and the next morning he started for his own home. He did not get any wealth from Śrī Krishṇa nor did he ask for it. But when he reached his house he saw to his wonder that there was a palatial building in the place of his poor cottage, well furnished, surrounded by gardens and lakes, and he was greeted by his wife, accompanied by beautiful maidens, dressed in rich costumes and ornaments. Sudāmā could understand that all this was the grace of Śrī Krishṇa, who is the lord of the universe. (The story of Krishṇa and Sudāmā is a favourite theme with the artists).

One day when Śrī Krishṇa was in Dvārakā there occurred a solar eclipse. Knowing that the eclipse would occur, many people went to Kurukshetra for a holy bath. Krishṇa, Balarāma and many others from Dvārakā also did come to Kurukshetra on his occasion, so also many princes from other parts of India, such as the kings of Matsya, Uśīnara, Kauśalya, Vidarbha, Kuru, Sriñjaya, Kamboja, Kekaya, Kuntī, Ānarta, etc. Nanda also accompanied by other cowherds and milk-maids came to Kurukshetra. They were all happy to meet Krishṇa and tears of affection came down from their eyes. Krishṇa and Balarāma were embraced by Nanda and Yaśodā. Rohiṇī and Devakī embraced Yaśodā. The milkmaids of Vraja who met Krishṇa after a long separation embraced him and were lost in his thoughts. Krishṇa seeing them in that condition met them in secret, and having embraced them asked about their welfare. He told them that being engaged in the task of annihilating the hostile kings he had to be away so long from them. He, however, enquired if the Gopīs had forgotten him as being ungrateful. He, however, consoled them saying that their affection would unite them with himself. Recognising him as the creator of the universe the Gopīs paid homage to him. They prayed

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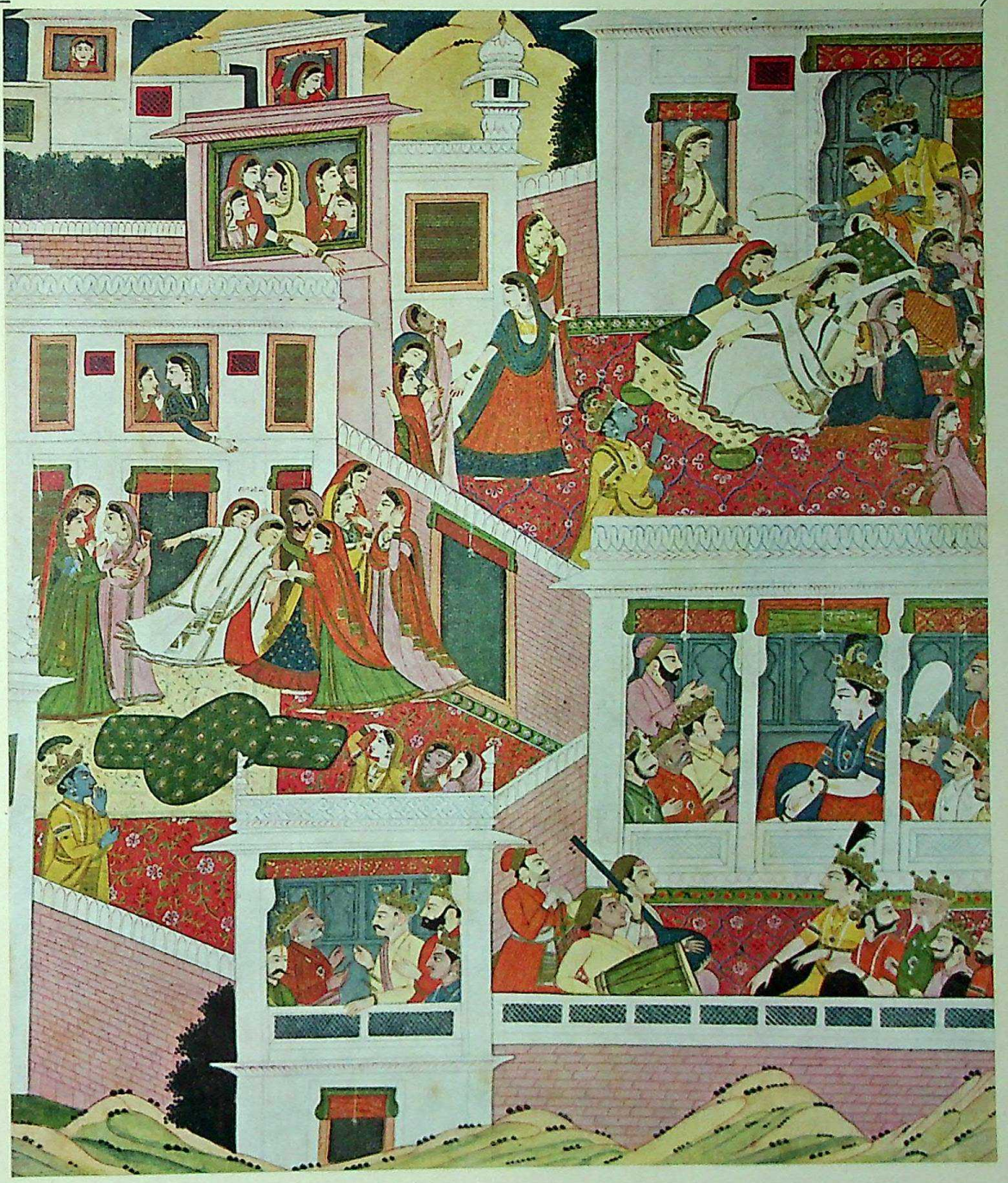

Krishṇa consoling Satyabhāmā (Pārijātaharaṇa episode), detail, Kangra Style, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

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that his lotus feet should remain always present in their hearts.

This story inspired Lachhīrāma to write the *Karuṇābharaṇa-nāṭaka*. In the last Act of this drama is mentioned the author of the *Yogavāśishṭha-sāra*, Kavīndrāchārya Sarasvatī who is said to have examined this *nāṭaka*. Kavīndrāchārya was a contemporary of Shah Jahan and the year 1653 seems to be the time when the *Yogavāśishṭha-sāra* is said to have been composed. So, it can be presumed that Lachhīrāma, the author of the *Karuṇābharaṇa* flourished some time during the second half of the 17th century. The subject of this drama is so interesting that it can move people very easily. It describes the meeting or union of Krishṇa with the people of Vraja whom Krishṇa did not visit since he had come to Dvārakā. Lachhīrāma has portrayed very beautifully the great joy and affection of the Gopas and Gopīs on one side and that of Krishṇa on the other when they met each other.

It was thus that the Yādavas and the inhabitants of Mathura came to know of each other's presence in Kurukshetra. The Gopas became overwhelmed with joy when they came to know that Krishṇa had come to Kurukshetra. Remembering their sports and friendship with Krishṇa, the Gopas were lost in a trance. Even the cows having heard the name of Krishṇa lost themselves in joy. On the other hand Krishṇa became very happy when he heard of the arrival of the Gopas and Gopīs. Devakī consoled him and brought him back to his consciousness. Rukmiṇī and other wives of Krishṇa became happy at the thought that they would get an opportunity now to see the *bāla-līlā*, i.e. the sports of Krishṇa's childhood re-enacted.

In his anxiety to meet the Gopas, Krishṇa came on foot to the camp of Nanda and met him, Yaśodā and other Gopas and Gopīs in great affection. At the end, Rādhā tormented by pangs of separation, embalmed her by touching Krishṇa's feet.

Krishṇa invited all the Gopas and Gopīs along with their cows to his own camp and were treated to a good feast. At night Rukmiṇī gave Rādhā very hot milk to drink. The feet of Krishṇa got the marks of burns as they are always in Rādhā's heart. At night Krishṇa sported with his own queens and then with Rādhā.

Many days passed in this way. One day Devakī reminded Krishṇa of Dvārakā and the latter decided to leave for it. Out of grief Rādhā jumped into a lake, to give up her life. But what a wonder it was that the water of the well was up to Rādhā's waist. Satyabhāmā used some abusive words against Rādhā. But Rādhā gave a proof of her true love towards Krishṇa inasumch as Krishṇa assumed two forms. One form went with Rādhā to Vraja and the other with Satyabhāmā and others to Dvārakā (Gopala Krishna, *Karuṇābharaṇa-nāṭaka*, *Kalānidhi*, Vol. I, pp. 61-69).

A series of Kangra paintings on the subjects was inspired by the *Karuṇābhāraṇa-nāṭaka*. Two paintings of this series, belonging to the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras, are reproduced here (figs. 238-239).

To continue the story of the Pāṇḍavas, they in course of their journey during the exile came to Dvaitavana and seeing various holy places came to Prabhāsa. Krishṇa and other Yādavas met Yudhishṭhira and his brothers at Prabhāsa.

When Yudhishṭhira and his brothers were in exile, Krishṇa, accompanied by Satyabhāmā, came to see them again. The sage Mārkaṇḍeya also came to see Yudhishṭhira at that moment, and as requested by Krishṇa and others he delivered significant speeches on various problems. He also described the glories of Nārāyaṇa and paid homage to Vaṭapatraśāyī Krishṇa as transcendental and supreme (fig.8) (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Vana Parva*, Chs. CLXXXI-CCXXX).

Once when Yudhishṭhira was seated with many Brāhmaṇas in his front, Draupadī and Satyabhāmā entered the hermitage. Satyabhāmā asked Draupadī how she could control the Pāṇḍavas and make them obedient to her. Satyabhāmā wanted to know whether it was by a practice of vows, or asceticism, or incantation or by the efficacy of science or the influence of youthful appearance or the recitation of particular formulae or collyrium and other medicament that she had unquestioned influence on her husbands. Draupadī replied, "A husband cannot be made obedient by a wife's incantations. O Satyabhāmā, I always do what is agreeable to my husbands." (fig. 240) (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Vana Parva*, Chs. CCXXXI-CCXXXIV, pp. 505-510).

Krishṇa came to see the Pāṇḍavas many a time during their exile and helped them in various ways. As shown below, they could avoid one of the greatest calamities, i.e. the curse of Durvāsas through Krishṇa's timely intervention.

Durvāsas with ten thousand disciples came to Duryodhana who could satisfy the angry sage with his hospitality, putting up with all his eccentricities. In order to put Yudhishṭhira to difficulty, Duryodhana asked the angry sage to go with his disciples to Yudhishṭhira's place as his guest. So requested, the sage came to Yudhishṭhira after he and his brothers and Draupadī had all finished their meals.

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Yudhishṭhira received Durvāsas and his disciples respectfully. Not knowing how Yudhishṭhira would provide a feast to them, he requested the sage and his disciples to finish their ablution. Draupadī was plunged in anxieties. She began to pray to Krishṇa, "Krishṇa, O Keśava of mighty arms, O son of Devakī, whose power is inexhaustible, O Vāsudeva, O lord of the universe, and of all created beings, I seek thy protection."

Thus adored by Draupadī, Krishṇa perceiving her difficulty, left Dvārakā and came to Draupadī. Beholding Vāsudeva, Draupadī bowed down to him in great joy and informed him of the arrival of the Munis and the difficulty that had arisen. And having heard everything Krishṇa said unto her: "I am very much afflicted with hunger, do thou givest me some food without delay and then thou mayest go about their work." Draupadī said that she had already finished her meals and the sun-given vessel was now empty. Krishṇa asked her to bring the vessel to him and when it was brought, he found a particle of grain and vegetable sticking at its rim. Swallowing it he said unto her, "May it please the god Hari, the soul of the universe, and may that god, who parteketh at sacrifices, be satiated at this." Then the long-armed Krishṇa asked Bhīmsena to invite the Munis. The Munis who were taking bath felt that their stomach was full and expressed their inability to eat anything. Thinking that the food prepared by the Pāṇḍavas would be spoilt, Durvāsas felt helpless and fled away with all his disciples. When Bhīmasena failed to find out the Rishis, he reported the matter to Yudhishṭhira who was astonished at this. Krishṇa saved them from Durvāsa's curse (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Vana prava*, Chs. CCLX-CCLXIII).

The twelve years of exile were passed by the Pāṇḍavas. But they were yet to pass one more year, and this year in disguise, according to the condition imposed on them by Duryodhana. After consultation with the brothers, Yudhishṭhira decided to spend the last one year in the Matsya-rājya, ruled over by Virāṭa. They assumed some false names, respectively such as Kaṅka, Vallabha, Brihannala, Granthika and Tantrīpāla. Draupadī called herself Sairindhrī. Nobody could recognise them in Virāṭa's household. When the year was just out, Suśarmā, the king of Trigarata and Kauravas with Bhīshma, Droṇa and Karṇa attacked Matsya-rājya. The Pāṇḍavas, out of gratitude, fought on behalf of their benefactor king (Virāṭa) and defeated both the Kauravas and Suśarmā. After this war was over, the Pāṇḍavas discolsed their identity and the marriage of Uttarā, daughter of the king Virāṭa with Abhimanyu (son of Arjuna) was fixed. Yudhishṭhira sent a word to Krishṇa and Baladeva. Thus invited, Krishṇa accompanied by Halāyudha (Balarāma), Kritavarmā, Hārdikya, Sātyaki, Brishṭi, Akrūra, Sāmba, Nishanṭha (son of Baladeva), Abhimanyu and Subhadrā came to the town of Upaplavya in the kingdom of Virāṭa. Vāsudeva offered the Pāṇḍavas much wealth, many women, jewels and costumes. King Drupada and many other princes also attended the marriage ceremony. After the marriage was over, Krishṇa brought about a meeting of the kings and impressed upon all present that the Pāṇḍavas should get back their kingdom. Krishṇa said, "It is known to you all, how Yudhishṭhira was deceitfully defeated at dice by the son of Suvala (Śakunī, maternal uncle of Duryodhana) and how he was robbed of his kingdom and how a stipulation was made by him conceiving his exile in the forest...."

"These illustrious men have spent the thirteenth year, employed in the menial service of others. This being so, it is for you to consider what will be for the good of both Yudhishṭhira and Duryodhana, and what as regards the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, will be consistent with the rule of righteousness and propriety and what will meet with the approbation of all. The virtuous king Yudhishṭhira would not covet even the celestial kingdom. But righteously he would accept the rule even of a single village. How the sons of Dhritarāshṭra fraudulently robbed him of his parental kingdom and how he hath passed a life of unbearable hardships, are known to all the kings assembled here. The sons of Dhritarāshṭra are incapable of overcoming by strength Arjuna, the son of Prithā. Nevertheless, king Yudhishṭhira and his friends have no desire other than the good of Dhritarāshṭra's son. These brave sons of Kuntī and the two sons of Mādrī, ask for only what they themselves achieving victory in battle had won from the defeated kings. You no doubt know fully well how those enemies of the Pāṇḍavas with the object of possessing themselves of the kingdom, endeavoured by various means to destroy them, when they were mere boys, so wicked and rancorous they were, consider how grasping they are and how virtuous Yudhishṭhira is. Consider also the relationship that exists between them. I beseech you all to consult together and also think separately. The Pāṇḍavas have always had a regard for truth. They have fulfilled their promise to the very letter." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Udyoga Parva*, Section I, p. 1 ff). Having listened to the speech of Krishṇa, marked by prudence and regard for virtue, and showing a pacific and impartial spirit, Baladeva also suggested that the sons of Dhritarāshṭra should give Yudhishṭhira back his kingdom, and said that somebody should visit Duryodhana to ascertain his mind. The messenger should make use of words chracterised by humility, words intended to conciliate Vichitravīrya's sons. Sātyaki in his speech condemned all conciliatory steps as Duryodhana and his friends have wrongly

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deprived the Pāṇḍavas of their kingdom and he suggested that they should fight against Duryodhana and recover the lost kingdom. Drupada supported Sātyaki's proposal to fight and observed that the messengers should be immediately despatched to Dhrishṭaketu, and Jayatsena and the prince of Kekayas. Duryodhana also would send word to all the kings. The right minded persons respond to the request of those that first beseech them. Drupada further said that quickly the messengers should be sent to Hārdikya and Āhuka and the king of the Mallas and other kings for help.

Krishṇa endorsed the views of Drupada (chief of the Somaka tribe) but added, "As we are desirous of adopting a political course, this is no doubt our first duty, a man acting otherwise would be a great fool. But our relationship to both the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas is equal, howsoever, these two parties may behave with each other. Both you and we have been invited here on the occasion of a marriage. The marriage having been celebrated, let us go home well pleased. If Duryodhana does not want to settle the matter peacefully, then alone there should be a war." (*Ibid.*, Section IV).

To negotiate peace Dhaumya left for Hastināpura, and Dhanañjaya set out for Dvārakā. Duryodhana also arrived at Dvārakā by means of fine horses, possessing the speed of the wind. When both Arjuna and Duryodhana arrived at Krishṇa's place, they found Krishṇa asleep. Duryodhana entered the room where Krishṇa was sleeping and sat down on a fine seat kept at the head of the bed. After him entered Kirīṭī, the wearer of the diadem (Arjuna) and stood at the back of the bed. When Krishṇa awoke, he first saw Arjuna, and then Duryodhana. He asked the reason of their coming. Duryodhana asked his help in the impending war. He said that he had come first and he hoped that Krishṇa who stands at the top of all right minded persons in the world would extend his help to one who asked for it first. Krishṇa said that he had not the least doubt that he (Duryodhana) had come first, but his eyes fell on Arjuna first (fig. 242). He observed, "On account of your first arrival and on account of my having beheld him (Arjuna) first, I shall, no doubt, lend my assistance to both. But it is that those who are junior in years should have the first choice. Therefore, Dhanañjaya, the son of Kunti, is entitled to the first choice. There is a large body of cowhereds, numbering ten crores, rivalling me in strength and known as the Nārāyaṇas, all of whom are able to fight in the thick of battle. These soldiers irresistible in battle, shall be sent to one of you, and I alone resolved not to fight on the field, and laying down my arms will go to the other. You may, O son of Kunti, first select whichever of these two commends itself to you. For, according to law, you have the right to first choice." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, Section VII, pp. 9 and 10).

Dhanañjaya selected Krishṇa who was not to fight on the battle field, but Duryodhana selected for himself Krishṇa's entire Nārāyaṇī army and became very happy. Duryodhana then asked for Balarāma's help but the latter said that he would remain absolutely neutral. Duryodhana then went to Kritavarmā and the latter gave him a vast number of troops which delighted Duryodhana very much. Requested by Arjuna, Krishṇa agreed to drive his chariot.

Dhaumya (the family priest of the Pāṇḍavas) wanted that the war should be avoided and with that in view he went to the *Kuru-sabhā* and pleaded that Duryodhana should give the Pāṇḍavas back their kingdom. He mentioned the valour of Arjuna and wisdom of Krishṇa . But the Kauravas did not respond to Dhaumya's suggestions. Dhritarāshṭra, however, sent Sañjaya as an envoy to the Pāṇḍavas at Upaplavya.

As desired by Dhritarāshṭra Sañjaya came to the Pāṇḍavas, surrounded by Krishṇa, Sātyaki, and other friends and proposed that there should be peace and no war between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. Sañjaya pointed out that Yudhishṭhira was always mindful of his duties and now departing from the path of virtue he (Yudhishṭhira) should not indulge in war which would bring bad consequences to the Pāṇḍavas. These words of Sañjaya were unkind, specially when he knew that the Pāṇḍavas were not at fault. Krishṇa reminded Sañjaya that it did not behove him and the Kauravas to talk of virtue when Duḥśāsana, Duryodhana and Karṇa insulted Draupadī in the open assembly hall.

After doing his duties as an envoy Sañjaya went back to Hastinapura and admonished Dhritarāshṭra for his weaknesses of character and said that as the fire destroys the forest, so would the Pāṇḍavas destroy the Kauravas. Hearing this, Dhritarāshṭra called his counsellor Vidura who was intelligent and wise. He also advised Dhritarāshṭra to give the Pāṇḍavas back their kingdom. But Duryodhana and Karṇa did not agree to it. So the war became inevitable.

When Sañjaya went back to Hāstinapura, Yudhishṭhira addressed Krishṇa thus: "O thou that art devoted to friends, the time hath come for friends to show their friendship. I do not see any other person besides you who can save us in this distress. Relying on you, O Mādhava, we had fearlessely asked back our share from Duryodhana who is filled with pride..... O Chastiser of foes, thou protected the Vrishṇis in all

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calamities, do thou protect the Pāṇḍavas also from a great danger, for they deserve your protection." Hearing this Krishṇa agreed to go to the court of the Kurus to try for peace to the advantage of both the parties (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Udyoga Parva*, Section LXXII, pp. 159 ff).

Yudhishṭhira did not want Krishṇa to go to the Kurus. Duryodhana was not likely to accept his words. Again, all the Kshatriyas of the world, obedient to Duryodhana's command had already assembled to help him. Yudhishṭhira said that if any mischief was done to Krishṇa nothing, not even divinity nor even the sovereignty over all the gods would be of any delight to him. The holy one (Lord Krishṇa) said, "I know, O monarch the sinfulness of Dhritarāshṭra's son, but by going there, we will escape the blame of all the kings of the earth. (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Udyoga Parva*, Section LXXII, pp. 163 ff).

Krishṇa reminded Yushishṭhira, Bhīma and the other Pāṇḍavas of their duties as Kshatriya. He was astonished that all the Pāṇḍavas except Sahadeva were in favour of peace. Sahadeva alone wanted an encounter with Duryodhana. Beholding Bhīmasena pleading for peace Krishṇā (Draupadī) with tears in her eyes, described her sorrows, how she of high lineage and also being the spouse of the Pāṇḍavas was seized by hair and dragged in the open assembly by Duḥśāsana. Listening to Draupadī's sorrowful words, Krishṇa comforted her by saying that the Kauravas would very soon meet their doom for their evil deeds (fig. 241).

When Janārdana (Krishṇa) set out from Upaplavya, Dhritarāshṭra made grand preparations against the wishes of Duryodhana to receive Krishṇa, and proposed to bestow much wealth and lavish presents on him (figs. 243 and 244). Vidura, however, said, that Krishṇa who is magnanimous would not accept anything except water to wash his feet. What Keśava wanted was to establish peace between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. Dhritarāshṭra, instead of trying to purchase him through wealth, should be sincere in accepting Krishṇa's proposal for peace. Bhīshma also advised for peace. But all this wise counsel enraged Duryodhana and he said that he would imprison Krishṇa and thereby secure the submission of the Pāṇḍavas. Krishṇa warned Duryodhana not to take any such rash step. Saying this Keśava (Krishṇa), burst out into a loud laughter and asumed his *Virāṭa-rūpa*. From his body that resembled a blazing fire, issued myriads of god, each of lighting effulgence, and not bigger than the thumb and on his forehead appeared Brahmā and on his breast Rudra. And on his arms appeared the regent of the world, and from his mouth issued Agni, the Ādityas, the Sādhyas, the Vasus, the Aśvinas, the Maruts, with Indra and the Viśvadevas, and myriads of Yakshas, and the Gandharvas, and Rākshasas, also of the same measure, issued from thence. And from his two arms issued Saṅkarshaṇa, and Dhanañjaya. And Arjuna stood on his right, bow in hand and Rāma stood on his left, armed with plough ..... on his diverse arms were seen the conch, the discus, the mace, the bow called Śārṅga, the plough, the javelin, the Nandaka, and ever other weapons, all shining with effulgence and upraised for striking. And from his eyes, nose and ears, and every part of his body issued fierce particles of fire mixed with smoke..... Beholding that awful form of the high-souled Keśava, all the kings closed their eyes with affrighted heart, except Droṇa, Bhīshma and Vidura, Sañjaya and the Rishis. As Keśava left the Kuru court all the kings followed him. Dhritarāshṭra was afraid and pleaded that in spite of his best efforts, he could not persuade Duryodhana to be on the right path (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Udyoga Parva*, Section CXXXI).

The mighty-armed Janārdana addressed Dhritarāshṭra, Droṇa, Bhīshma, Vidura, Vāhika and Kripa and said, "Ye have yourselves witnessed all that hath happened in the assembly of the Kurus, viz. how wicked Duryodhana, like an uneducated wretch left the court from anger and how Dhritarāshṭra also described himself as helpless (figs. 245 and 246). So I will go and report to Yudhisṭhira". On the way Krishṇa took Karṇa on his chariot and disclosed his identity that he was actually the first son of Kuntī and the eldest of all the Pāṇḍavas. He urged Karṇa to desert Duryodhana and join the Pāṇḍavas. Being the eldest he would be the king. But Karṇa, out of his gratitude to Duryodhana (as Duryodhana offered him social status at the time when he was insulted as a *Sūta-putra* by all) refused to join the Pāṇḍavas knowing fully well, however, that the Paṇḍavas, aided by Krishṇa, were sure to be victorious.

Coming back to Upaplavya from Hastināpura Krishṇa represented to the Pāṇḍavas all that had happened. Duryodhana did not agree to give even five villages to the Pāṇḍavas without a battle. The war was thus inevitable. Both the sides arranged their troops in Kurukshetra. Krishṇa promised not to take up any arms but agreed to become Arjuna's charioteer.

Entering Kurukshetra, the Pāṇḍavas, endued with great might, along with the Somakas, advanced against the Kauravas. and with their troops stationed themselves on the western part of the plain, facing the east. From the whole area of Jambudvīpa, came the warriors. Men of all races assembled there to participate in the Bhārata battle.

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Krishna delivering the message of the Gītā to Arjuna in the battle-field, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Vyāsa came to Dhritarāshṭra and offered him divine sight so that he could see the battle. Dhritarāshṭra did not like to see the slaughter of his kinsmen; he wanted only to hear of the events of the battle. Vyāsa gave a boon to Sañjaya to see the battle and narrate it to Dhritarāshṭra. Seeing the vast Kaurava army Yudhishṭhira became despondent and asked Arjuna how they could win the battle. Arjuna said that the victory to them was certain as Krishṇa was on their side. He quoted what Nārada said, "There is victory where Krishṇa is. Victory is inherent to Krishṇa. Indeed it followeth Mādhava. And as victory is one of its attributes, so humility is his another attribute. Govinda is possessed of energy that is infinite. Even in the midst of immeasurable foes, he is without pain. He is the most eternal of male beings. And there victory is where Krishṇa is." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Bhīshma Parva*, Section XXI).

Arjuna asked Krishṇa to place his car between the two armies so that he could see the warriors with whom he was going to fight. Seeing the kinsmen assembled together to fight, Arjuna became sad. His eyes were full of tears and he expressed his desire to abandon the battle. Krishṇa delivered a highly instructive and philosophical discourse to Arjuna and this discourse is the immortal *Bhagavadgītā* which is the epitome of Indian wisdom.

The teaching of the *Gītā* is pragmatic and very practical. It exhorts one to do one's duty selflessly, without desiring for any fruit, fearless of consequences. The essence of the *Gītā* is the *Buddhi-vāda*. "He who has cast off all selfish, separative desire, all personal lusts and hates and fears and greeds, who remains undepressed in misfortune and sorrow, and unrelated in success and joy, ever content, ever steadfastly established in the universal self, he is the man of steady understanding, of assured intelligence." (Bhagavan Das, *Krishṇa*, p. 167).

When Arjuna showed weakness and soft heartedness at the sight of the relatives assembled at the battle, Krishṇa reminds him of his duties as a Kshatriya to fight an oppressor, to fight for the deliverance of the nation and for the establishment of the peace and order. Arjuna implored Krishṇa to tell him what should be done or what should not be done (figs. 247 and 248). Krishṇa encouraged him to fight whatever may be the consequences. Krishṇa declared himself to be Supreme Lord, the Eternal spirit and out of grace for his devotee revealed his universal form to him—the form which covered the entire universe. Arjuna trembled seeing Krishṇa's great form with many mouths and eyes, many arms, thighs and feet, many bellies, and many tusks and prayed to him to withdraw it and assume his human form (figs. 249 and 250) (*Bhagavadgītā*, Canto, XI).

Before the battle started, Yudhishṭhira went to pay respects to Bhīshma, Droṇa, and Śalya and asked for their blessings for victory in battle. All of them assured that 'where Krishṇa is victory is'. As stated above, Bhīshma was appointed General to conduct the war on behalf of the Kauravas. He was the greatest warrior of the time. Though old in age, he was endued with energy equal to that of the sun itself. The Pāṇḍava army attacked him with all force but none could stand his arrows. He sent to the abode of Yama hundreds and thousands of Pāṇḍava soldiers. Bhīshma almost completely crushed and routed the Pāṇḍava army. At Bhīshma's prowess and success Yudhishṭhira became dejected and he went to Krishṇa for advice. Krishṇa encouraged Yudhishṭhira saying that there was no cause of fear as he was being assisted by his heroic brothers, Dhrishṭadyumna and others.

Bhīshma waged a terrible war (fig. 252). Many of the Pāṇḍava soldiers, throwing away their armour, fled in different directions. They were like bulls running wild in fear. Krishṇa thought that it would not be good if the situation continued any longer. So he provoked Arjuna to fight the invincible Bhīshma with greater determination and without any consideration or love for Bhīshma who brought up the young Pāṇḍavas after they lost their father. Arjuna proceeded to Bhīshma to fight but the latter covered Arjuna's car with a shower of arrows. Krishṇa, however, saved the position by his strategy. Then followed a grim fight between Bhīshma and Arjuna, two greatest warriors of the time. As Vāsudeva showed great skill in the management of steeds Arjuna could baffle all those arrows of Bhīshma. Finding that Pārtha was fighting mildly and Bhīshma was scorching everything like the sun, Krishṇa jumped down from the chariot of Arjuna and rushed towards Bhīshma with a whip in hand, desirous of slaying him (fig. 251) (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Bhīshma Parva*, Scetion CVII). Seeing Krishṇa advance towards him, Bhīshma was pleased and said, "Come, come, O thou of eyes like lotus petals, O God of the gods, I bow to thee. O best of the Sāttvatas, throw me down today in this great battle. O sinless one, great will be good done to me, O Krishṇa, in every respect in the world ..... O Govinda, strike me as thou pleasest, for I am thy slave.... The mighty Pārtha, that slayer of hostile heroes, however, forcibly catching hold of his legs, stopped Hrishīkeśa (Krishṇa) with great difficulty at the tenth step. Then Arjuna, his dear friend, filled with sorrow, affectionately addressed Keśava: "It behoveth thee not to make those words false, which thou hadst spoken before, viz., I will not fight! O Mādhava, people will say that thou art a liar. All this burden resteth

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upon me. I will slay the grandsire. I swear, O Keśava ...." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Bhīshma Parva*, pp. 287 and 288). Then started again a terrible fight between Bhīshma and Arjuna and all the time the former had the better over the Pāṇḍava army. When the battle ceased for the day the Pāṇḍavas sought Krishṇa's advice as to how to defeat Bhīshma. Knowing that Bhīshma alone would be able to tell Yudhishṭhira the means by which he could be defeated, he accompanied by Krishṇa and others saw Bhīshma in the tent at night. Bhīshma said that if Śikhaṇḍī, who was a female before, and turned a male afterwards, fought against him, he would cease to strike. Obtaining this opportunity, Arjuna should throw shafts at him. None other than Krishṇa and Arjuna were capable of slaying him in battle.

As settled, the Pāṇḍava army marched next day with Śikhaṇḍī at their head, supported by Pārtha (Arjuna). The Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas closely fought with each other and did their best to guard their generals. Then Śikhaṇḍī struck Bhīshma in the centre of the chest with broad-headed arrows. Remembering his feminity Bhīshma struck him not. Ignoring Śikhaṇḍī, Bhīshma began to check Arjuna. The Pāṇḍavas also mustered strong to overwhelm Bhīshma, who was ably being protected by Duḥśāsana. Bhīshma, blazing like fire was causing a havoc to the Pāṇḍava army. Arjuna and other Pāṇḍava heroes were incessantly piercing Bhīshma with arrows. But he was also equally afflicting the heroes of the other side with his deadly shafts. Seeing however the futility of the war and remembering the unslayableness of the Pāṇḍavas and feminity of Śikhaṇḍī, he thought of giving up arms and engaging himself in meditation of God, though according to the boon received from his father, he was invincible in battle and was one whose death depended on his choice. Keeping Śikhaṇḍī in his front Arjuna hurled deadly shots at Bhīshma who became tired fighting continuously for ten days a deadly fight. Thus overpowered by Arjuna, Bhīshma fell down from his car with his head to the east and loud cries of '*alas*' were heard in all directions. His body did not touch the earth, it lay on the bed of arrows. While falling Bhīshma marked that the sun was then in southern solstice and it was not an auspicious time for death, and he lived till the sun reached the northern solstice (figs. 253 and 254) (P. C. Ray, *op. cit.*, *Bhīshma Parva*, Scetion CXX).

While Bhīshma was lying on the bed of arrows, both Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas came to seek his advice. He advised Duryodhana to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.

After the fall of Bhīshma, Duryodhana appointed Droṇa as the Head of the army. Droṇa was a great archer and it was he who taught the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas the use of arm as their preceptor. Under the leadership of Droṇa, Bhagadatta waged a terrible battle against the Pāṇḍavas. Arjuna advanced to check him; but unfortunately the Samsaptakas, fourteen thousand in number, challenged him to fight. After the defeat of the Samsaptakas, Krishṇa asked Arjuna to proceed towards Bhagadatta. In the mean time Suśarman advanced against Arjuna, but he was also defeated. Then he came upon Bhagadatta, the king of Prāgjyotisha and a fierce encounter took place between them. Bhagadatta and Dhanañjaya coursed on the field, the one on his car and the other (Bhagadatta) on his elephant. The latter baffled the arrows of Arjuna and threw many shafts at him and Krishṇa and he urged his elephant for their destruction. There was a fierce exchnage of shafts and arrows between Bhagadatta and Arjuna. Then filled with rage, Bhagadatta turned his hook into the Vaishṇava weapon and hurled it on Arjuna's breast. Krishṇa covered Arjuna and received the all-slaying weapons on his breast and thus saved Arjuna. That weapon became a triumphal garland on Keśava's breast and Arjuna then killed Bhagadatta (fig. 256). When Arjuna asked about the secret of the Vaishṇava weapon of Bhagadatta Krishṇa said that he gave this invincible weapon to Naraka and Bhagadatta got it from Naraka and nobody other than he (Krishṇa) was able to resist it (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Scetion XXIX).

The fall of Bhagadatta was a great blow to the Kauravas, and as the war proceeded the Pāṇḍavas fighting under the guidance of Krishṇa were worsting the Kaurva army. Droṇa's failure to capture Yudhisṭhira annoyed Duryodhana who thought that their General (Droṇāchārya), a great warrior, was not fighting whole-heartedly for his side. Droṇa assured him that he was doing his best and it was not possible for anyone to resist, Arjuna and Krishṇa (the creator of the universe). Droṇa, however, to perform his duties as a general formed a formidable array which is impenetrable even by the very gods. He, however, said that he would be successful in capturing a very powerful Pāṇḍava warrior, if Arjuna was kept away by a section of the Kaurava army. Thus arranged, the Samsaptakas kept Arjuna engaged in fighting on the other side and Droṇa was afflicting the Pāṇḍava army with deadly shafts and nobody could approach the circular array of Droṇa. As Arjuna was away fighting the Samsaptakas, Yudhishṭhira encouraged Abhimanyu, (Arjuna's son) who was as brave a warrior as his father to pierce through the array, which was being guarded by the best of the Kaurava warriors including Jayadratha (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Sections XXXIII ff).

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As the battle proceeded, Abhimanyu (who was the son of Arjuna by Subhadrā, (sister of Krishṇa) was killed unrighteously by the joint action of the Saptarathīs, seven warriors of chariots of the Kaurava side. Arjuna's grief knew no bounds. He broke down in sorrow, and Yudhishṭhira, and his other brothers also became cheerless. Abhimanyu was then only sixteen years of age. Krishṇa consoling Pārtha, said, "Do not yield so to grief: This is the way of all brave .... unretreating heroes, especially of Kshatriayas, whose profession is battle. Death is certain for heroes that do not retreat. There is no doubt that Abhimanyu hath ascended to the regions that are reserved for persons of righteous acts." Arjuna took the vow that the next day, before the sun sets, he would kill Jayadratha who had baffled the efforts of all the Pāṇḍava warriors to save Abhimanyu who as a result of this had to fight alone seven Rathīs.

Subhadrā (Abhimanyu's mother) and Uttarā (Abhimanyu's young wife) were overwhelmed with grief. Vāsudeva consoled Subhadrā saying, "O Lady of Vrishṇi's race do not grieve, with thy daughter-in-law, for thy son. All creatures have but one end ordained by Time. The end thy son hath met with, that becometh a hero of proud lineage, especially who is a Kshatriya. Do not therefore grieve." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, Section LXXVII).

Arjuna appeared in the battle field determined to kill Jayadratha to avenge the death of his son, Abhimanyu. Krishṇa was driving the chariot with great energy. He displayed his skill in driving the car by diverse kinds of circling motions. Standing on his car Arjuna discharged his sharp arrows full two miles ahead, and despatched hundred of Kaurava soldiers to the abode of Yama. Meanwhile two heroic brothers, Binda and Anubinda of Avantī attacked Arjuna with a huge force. But both of them were defeated, though after a grim battle. Arjuna's chariot horses were extremely tired and afflicted and Arjuna asked Krishṇa what should be done next. He got down from the car and stood firm on the ground with his Gāṇḍīva to check the Kaurava army. Krishṇa unyoked the horse to give them rest and plucked arrows from their body. Then he said to Arjuna: "The steeds want water for drink and not for a bath." Arjuna pierced the earth with a weapon and made an excellent lake from which the steeds could drink. The celestial Rishi Nārada came to have a look at that lake created in a moment. Krishṇa who was skilled in grooming horses removed their fatigue and pain. Plucking out their arrows and rubbing them with his own hands, and making them trot duly he caused them to drink. Having caused them to drink, and removed their fatigue and pain (fig. 255), he once more carefully yoked them to the car (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Section XCIX, pp. 195-197).

Arjuna now set out to pierce through the vast army of the Kauravas in search of Jayadratha. It was, however, a long pursuit as Jayadratha was protected by Droṇa and other powerful warriors of the Kaurava army. There was a strong fight between Duryodhana and Arjuna. Duryodhana was clad in an impenetrable armour.

The Kaurava army was vast. But Arjuna and Sātyaki pierced unvanquished through the Kaurava army. There took place then a fierce battle between Droṇa and Sātyaki (Yuyudhāna). Having vanquished Droṇa, and other warriors including the Yavanas and Kambojas, Sātyaki proceeded towards Arjuna. Bhīma also defeated Karṇa. The hands of Bhūriśravā were cut by Arjuna (*Mahābhārata*, *Droṇa Parva*, Sections CXLII-CXLIII), when it was found that Bhūriśravā overpowered Sātyaki. When Bhūriśravā was thus killed by Sātyki, Duryodhana sought Karṇa's help to save Jayadratha. Arjuna had vowed that he would kill Jayadratha before the sun sets that day. Karṇa, Droṇa, Aśvatthamā, Duryodhana, Duḥśāsaṇa and Śalya all were fighting their best to save Jayadratha. But nobody could check Arjuna who came upon Jayadratha. Karṇa was resisting Pārtha, but of no avail. Arjuna pierced Jayadratha with his shafts. Jayadratha also pierced Krishṇa and Arjuna with arrows. While the fight was going on, the sun was going down. Krishṇa then told Pārtha, "Behold, O Pārtha, the ruler of Sindhus is being protected by six car-warriors. Without vanquishing those six-car-warriors in battle, O Bull among men, thou wilt never be able to slay the ruler of the Sindhus even if thou exertest without intermissions."

Krishṇa possessed of ascetic or Yaugic powers, created false darkness. The Kaurava army was glad thinking that Arjuna had failed in his promise to kill Jayadratha before the sunset, and "all of them stood, with heads thrown backwards." King Jayadratha was also in the same attitude. "And while the ruler of the Sindhus was thus beholding the sun, Krishṇa once more addressing Dhanañjaya, said these words: "Behold, the heroic ruler of the Sindhus is now looking at the sun, casting off his fear of thee, O foremost among the Bhāratas. This is the hour, O mighty-armed one, for the slaughter of that wicked-souled wretch". Thus addressed, Arjuna attacked Jayadratha and the mighty Kaurava warriors who were protecting Jayadratha. Advised by Krishṇa, Arjuna shot the deadly arrow inspired with *mantras* and cut off the head of Jayadratha. Instead of falling on the ground, the head fell on the lap of his father, Vriddhakshetra

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(fig. 257). If Jayadratha's head fell on the earth, Arjuna's head would have broken into several pieces. When the head of Jayadratha fell from his father's lap, the latter's head cracked into many pieces. Thus Krishṇa told Arjuna the secret as to how Jayadratha was to be killed and why it should not at once fall on the earth (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Section CXLVI).

The Jayadratha-vadha brings to limelight Krishṇa's power of yoga or ascetic powers. It is through his Yaugic power that he could hide the sun for sometime to delude the Kaurava army. In more places than one the *Mahābhārata* speaks of him as Yogeśvara, the best of the Yogīs.

After the death of Jayadratha, Kripa attacked Arjuna, but was badly defeated by the latter. Then followed a fight between Karṇa on behalf of the Kauravas and Sātyaki who belonged to the Pāṇḍava army. Sātyaki defeated Karṇa. The next important event to narrate is the killing of Vrishasena (son of Karṇa) by Arjuna. Śrī Krishṇa showed the ultimate results of the war to Arjuna, i.e. all the opponents defeated by Arjuna lay killed in the battle field. In other words, the results of the whole battle were revealed to Arjuna beforehand.

Thereafter Krishṇa reported the death of Jayadratha to Yudhishṭhira. The latter embraced both the Krishṇas, i.e. Krishṇa and Arjuna. Yudhishṭhira said to Krishṇa, "O thou of the Vrishṇi race, in their case with whom you are gratified, O giver of honours, it is through thy grace, O Hrishīkeśa, that Śakra hath become the chief of the celestials. It is through thy grace that that blessed personage obtained on the field of battle the sovereignty of the three worlds. Thou art the creator of all the three worlds, thou the supreme soul, and thou art immutable. They that behold thee, O Hrishīkeśa, are never confounded. Without beginning and without death, thou art divine, the creator of all the worlds, and immutable. They that are devoteed to thee, O Hrishīkeśa, always tide over their difficulty." (*Ibid.*, section CXLIX).

At the fall of Jayadratha Duryodhana lost all hopes of victory. He could understand that no warrior of the Kaurava side, be he Droṇa, Karṇa, Kripa or anybody would be able to defeat Arjuna, protected by Krishṇa. Karṇa, however, encouraged Duryodhana to have hopes and continue the fight. The battle started again with the Pañchālas and Kauravas encountering each other. Duryodhana infuriated, at the death of the Sindhurāja, Jayadratha penetrated into the Pāṇḍava army and began to crush it. Droṇa also caused a great havoc to the Pāṇḍava army. Then started a fierce fight between Aśvatthāmā and Ghaṭotkacha, the son of Bhīmasena. Again, Duryodhana and Yudhishṭhira engaged themselves in a deadly fight, and Droṇāchārya appeared on the scene. Pāṇḍavas including Ghaṭotkacha in great number encountered Droṇāchārya but very few could stand before him. The war continued also in the night. Droṇāchārya killed the Kekayas and all the sons of Dhrishṭadyumna and in fact all that came in his way, including the king Śibi. Bhīmasena also brought a havoc to the Kaurava army by killing the Kalinga prince and Dhritarāshṭra's sons, Dushkarṇa and Durmada. Somadatta fought Sātyaki but he was defeated by the latter. Ghaṭotkacha fought with Aśvatthāmā. Aśvatthāmā killed Ghaṭotkacha's son, and the sons of Drupada and one *akshauhiṇī* of Pāṇḍava soldiers. The 173rd Section of the *Mahābhārata* (*Droṇa Parva*) describes a terrible fight between Karṇa and Dhrishṭadyumna. The latter was completely routed with his helpers. Karṇa cut off the arms of the flying Pañchāla hosts. Yudhishṭhira was terribly upset at this massacre and asked Arjuna to fight Karṇa to death. Arjuna was determined to chllenge Karṇa when Krishna said, "I behold Karṇa, O son of Kuntī that tiger among men, that warrior of superhuman prowess, careering in battle like the chief of the celestials himself; O Dhanañjaya, there is none else capable of advancing against him in battle, save thee, O tiger among men, and the Rākshasa Ghaṭotkacha! I do not however regard the time to have come, O mighty-armed one, for thee to encounter the Sūta's son (Karṇa) in battle! The blazing dart given him by Vāsava is still with him, kept for thee with care by the Sūta's son. Let the mighty Ghaṭotkacha proceed against the son of Rādhā". (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Section, CLXXIV, pp. 402 ff).

As the Rākshasas are endowed with great prowess at night, Krishṇa asked Ghaṭotkacha to fight Karṇa at night, aided by his illusion.

The battle that took place between them resembled that between Indra and Prahlāda (in days of yore). Afflicted by the Rākshasa the Kuru host was exceedingly agitated. Displaying great bravery Karṇa and Ghaṭotkacha engaged themselves in a deadly nocturnal fight.

When the war between Ghaṭotkacha and Karṇa was in progress Alāyudha, the prince of the Rākshasas, who sided with Duryodhana attacked Bhīma who, though a great warrior, found it difficult to hold his own against Alāyudha. Seeing Bhīma's condition Vāsudeva told Ghaṭotkacha to abandon Karṇa for the present and slay Alāyudha. Ghaṭotkacha killed Alāyudha to the delight of the Pāṇḍvas and dismay of the Kauravas. Ghaṭotkacha was causing such a havoc to the Kaurava army, that Karṇa was compelled to throw that weapon to kill Ghaṭotkacha which he kept to fight Arjuna (P.C. Roy, *op. cit.*, section CLXXIX,

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pp. 415 ff). The death of Ghaṭotkacha at the hand of Karṇa (fig. 258) caused great grief to the Pāṇḍavas but Vāsudeva was happy.

Overwhelmed with the grief at Ghaṭotkacha's death Yudhiṣṭhira asked Nakula, Sahadeva and sons of Draupadī, Drupada, Virāṭa, Sātyaki, Kaikeyas, and Dhanañjaya to proceed against Droṇa. Dhrishṭadyumna was asked to resist Karṇa.

Duryodhana rushed to Droṇa's help. The war continued also during the night. Duryodhana, however, thought that Droṇa was mild towards the Pāṇḍavas and he was not exerting himself to the maximum. Droṇa refuted it and applauded Arjuna's prowess which was unequalled. When the battle commenced again, the Kuru army was divided into two bodies. Droṇa, with Duryodhana before him proceeded against Somakas, the Pāṇḍavas and Pañchālas. Seeing this Krishṇa addressed Arjuna and said, "Keeping thy foes to the left, place this division (commanded by Droṇa) to thy right". In accordance with this advice Arjuna moved to the left of those two mighty bowmen. Arjuna proved invincible in the battle. He resisted Droṇa, Karṇa and others who challenged him. The day was over and the darkness set in. Still the warriors went on fighting. A great carnage followed.

Droṇa waged a terrible battle. He killed Drupada, his three grandsons, king Virāṭa and many other warriors. Upon the fall of Virāṭa, and Drupada and the slaughter of many other Kshatriyas, the Chedis, the Matsyas and Pañchālas, Dhrishṭadyumna took a vow to kill Droṇa.

Duryodhana and his brothers were fighting with Nakula and Sahadeva, Karṇa with Bhīma and Arjuna with Droṇa. Sometimes Droṇa prevailed over Arjuna and sometimes Arjuna over Droṇa. Both showed great prowess and skill in warfare.

Finding that Droṇa was sweeping all the Pāṇḍavas off the face of the earth, Krishṇa advised that some contrivance should be resorted to to unman him. Further, Arjuna would not fight with Droṇa who was his preceptor. Krishṇa said that Droṇa was incapable of being vanquished by a force in a battle. When he would lay aside his weapons, he could he killed. Upon the fall of (his son) Aśvatthāmā he would give up arms and someone, therefore, should tell him that Aśvatthāmā had been slain in battle. Arjuna did not approve of this advice. Bhīmasena at that moment killed an elephant of that name, belonging to king Indravarman of Malwa. Bhīmasena approached and said that Aśvatthāmā had been killed, while concealing the fact that it was an elephant called Aśvatthāmā that was killed. But Droṇa did not believe what Bhīma had said.

Burning with grief Droṇa enquired of Kuntī's son (Yudhiṣṭhira) as to whether his son (Aśvatthāmā) had been slain or not. Droṇa firmly believed that Yudhiṣṭhira would never speak an untruth even for the sake of the sovereignty of the three worlds.

Meanwhile Govinda, knowing that Droṇa was capable of sweeping all the Pāṇḍavas addressed Yudhiṣṭhira and said, "If Droṇa fighteth, filled with rage, for even half-a-day, I tell thee truly, thy army will then be annihilated. Save us then from Droṇa. Under such circumstances, falsehood is better than truth. By telling an untruth for saving a life, one is not touched by sin." Bhīma also requested Yudhiṣṭhira to accept Krishṇa's advice. Induced by the counsels of Krishṇa, and Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira made up his mind to say what he was desired. He distinctly said that Aśvatthāmā was dead, adding indistinctly the word elephant after the name (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Section, CXCII, pp. 442-448).

Hearing Yudhiṣṭhir's words, Droṇa was plunged in grief and Dhrishṭadyumna, son of Drupada rushed to him with his victory-giving bow. Droṇa found that after four days and one night's fight his arrows had ceased to be effective. Because of his own exhaustion and also of his son's death as well as in consequence of the unwillingness of the celestial weapons to appear at his bidding, he desired to lay aside his weapons, as requested by the Rishis (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Section CXCII-CXCIII).

Droṇa, however, took up other weapons and began to fight with Dhrishṭadyumna. Sātyaki and the Śriñjayas also came to fight Droṇa. For the extermination of the Kshatriya race, Droṇa took to the Brāhma weapon. Finding the army of Dhrishṭadyumna helpless and incapable of fighting with Droṇa, Bhīma addressed these words to the preceptor (i.e. Droṇa): "He for whom thou hast taken up weapons and for whom thou livest, he, deprived of life, lieth today in the field of battle, unknown to thee and behind thy back. King Yudhiṣṭhira the just hath told thee this fact. It behoveth thee not to doubt this fact". (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Section CXCIII, p. 453), Thus addressed by Bhīma, Droṇa laid down his arms and loudly exhorted Karṇa, Kripa and Duryodhana to exert carefully in battle. Laying aside the weapons Droṇa sat in meditation on the terrace of his car. Beholding this, Dhrishṭadyumna took a sword and rushed against Droṇa. Droṇa himself was then in a supreme tranquil state, fixing his heart on that supreme and ancient being, Vishṇu and attained to the supreme region of Brahman, highest of all regions. Not knowing that Droṇa was already dead, Dhrishṭadyumna cut off Droṇa's head

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(fig. 259). Droṇa, dark in colour, was then eighty-five years of age (*Ibid.*, pp. 454-and 455).

Upon the fall of Droṇa, the Kuru camp was filled with grief, and the Kuru army was flying with speed except Aśvatthāmā. Aśvatthāmā approached Duryodhana and asked the cause of the rout of the Kuru army.

Hearing the slaughter of Droṇāchārya, Aśvatthāmā who is equal to Purandara in battle, to Kārtavīrya in energy and Brihaspati in wisdom became filled with grief and anger. He vowed that he would slay all including the foremost of the Pāṇḍava car warriors, with the help of the Nārāyaṇa weapon. When Aśvatthāmā invoked the Nārāyaṇa weapon, voilent winds began to blow. The Kaurva army which was flying in fear, assembled again under his leadership. Slaughtered by the Nārāyaṇa weapon,the Pāṇḍava troops were afflicted all over in the battlefield. Yudhishṭhira became frightened seeing the bad condition of his army. Krishṇa advised the troops to lay down their arms and alight from their cars. That was the only remedy against the Nārāyaṇa weapon. Everyone obeyed him except Bhīma. Bhīma opposed the laying down of the arms because that would throw aspersion on the fighting capacity of the Pāṇḍava army. So there started a terrible fight between Aśvatthāmā and Bhīma. The latter was overwhelmed by that weapon. Arjuna, to save Bhīma, covered him with Varuṇa weapon. Krishṇa dragged Bhīma down from his car and saved him from the *Nārāyaṇāstra* (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Droṇa Parva*, Sections CC-CCI).

After the fall of Droṇāchārya and the baffling of the *Nārāyaṇāstra*, Duryodhana with the approval of Aśvatthāmā and others installed Karṇa in the command of his army. Duryodhana thought that Bhīshma and Droṇa, though great warriors, were advanced in age and partial to Arjuna. Now Karṇa's prowess would assure him of the victory of the Kaurava army over the Pāṇḍavas. Karṇa bravely said that there was no doubt that he would vanquish all the Pāṇḍavas with their sons and Janārdana. Then Karṇa appeared on the field, blowing his conch. He arranged the troops in the Makara array (*makara-vyūha*) and proceeded against the Pāṇḍavas from the desire of victory.

Seeing Karṇa's arrangement of the Kaurava army, Arjuna disposed his army in counter array after the form of the half-moon.

Karṇa, a heroic bowman, began to smite the Pāṇḍava army with his straight shafts. Nakula rushed against Karṇa and Bhīmasena against Aśvatthāmā. Duryodhana rushed against Yudhishṭhira,while Dhanañjaya against the Samsaptakas. Dhrishṭadyumna rushed against Kripa and Śikhaṇḍī against Kritavarmā. Both Karṇa and Arjuna were causing a great havoc in the battle field.

Krishṇa recounted the exploits of Arjuna in the battle and encouraged him to kill Karṇa as the latter was at the root of all evil. Relying on his strength Duryodhana dared to start this war. If neglected, Karṇa would exterminate the Pāṇḍavas, the Śriñjayas and the Pañchālas.

Arjuna took the solemn vow of killing Karṇa that very day (17th day of the fight). Thus determined Arjuna and Bhīma were exterminating the Kaurava army. On the other side Karṇa was causing a great carnage among the Pāṇḍavas.

As Krishṇa was the charioteer of Arjuna, so Śalya became the charioteer of Karṇa at the request of Duryodhana.

Both invincible and capable of exterminating foes, Karṇa and Arjuna fearlessly fought each other in that dreadful battle. Further Duryodhana and Kritavarmā, Śakuni, Kripa and Aśvatthāmā attacked Arjuna and Krishṇa. But Arjuna baffled them. Aśvatthāmā catching hold of Duryodhana's hand requested him in soothing tone to dissuade from war and make peace with the Pāṇḍavas. But Duryodhana did not listen to it.

Both Karṇa and Arjuna were fighting a grim battle and everyone praised their skill in the use of weapons. But the hour of Karṇa's death soon came; the wheel of his chariot got stuck into the earth; again he forgot to make use of the illustrious weapon which Bhārgava or Paraśurāma had given him. Karṇa's car having sunk deep into the earth, he became filled with grief and melancholy, and waved his arms and began to rail at righteousness, saying that righteousness did not always protect those who were righteous. As he was saying this, he was agitated by Arjuna's arrows. But Karṇa baffled all the shafts displayed in front. But at that time the earth swallowed up one of the wheels of Karṇa's car. He alighted then from his vehicle, seized his sunken wheel with his two arms and endeavoured to lift it up with a great effort. He requested Arjuna to stop fighting for a moment till he could extricate the car.

Krishṇa addressed Karṇa, saying "By good luck it is, O son of Rādhā, that thou rememberest virtue. Thyself and Suyodhana and Duḥśāsana and Śakuni, the son of Suvala, had caused Draupadī, clad in a single piece of raiment, to be brought into the midst of the assembly. On that occasion, O Karṇa, this virtue of thine did not manifest itself. When at the assembly Śakuni, an adept in dice, vanquished Kuntī's son, Yudhishṭhira, who was unacquainted with it, whither had this virtue of thine gone? When the Kuru king

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(Duryodhana), acting under thy counsels, treated Bhīmasena in that way with the aid of snakes and poisoned food, whither had this virtue of thine then gone? When the period of exile into the woods was over as also the thirteenth year, thou didst not make over to the Pāṇḍavas their kingdom. Whither had this virtue of thine then gone?... Thou hadst laughed at Krishṇā (Draupadī) while she stood in the midst of the assembly, scantily dressed because in her season and obedient to Duḥśāsana's will, whither, then, O Karṇa, had this virtue of thine gone?... When many mighty car-warriors, encompassing the boy Abhimanyu in battle, slew him, whither had this virtue of thine then gone? If this virtue that thou now invokest was nowhere on those occasions, what is the use then of parching thy palate now by uttering that word? Thou art now for the practice of virtue, O Sūta, but thou shalt not escape with life." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Karṇa Parva*, Section XCI, pp. 251 and 252).

Thus reminded of his lapses by Vāsudeva, Karṇa hung down his head in shame and remained silent. However, endowed with great energy and prowess, he raised his bow, and continued to fight with Pārtha. Then Vāsudeva asked Arjuna to pierce Karṇa with a celestial weapon and throw him down: Thus addressed by the holy one, Arjuna became filled with rage and blazing flames of fire seemed to emanate from all the pores of his body. Beholding it, Karṇa, invoking the Brāhma weapons, showered his shafts upon Dhanañjaya, and once more made an effort to extricate his car. Arjuna, aiming at Karṇa, hurled a favourite weapon of his that was inspired with the energy of Agni. Karṇa, however, quenched that conflagration with the Varuṇa weapon. There were many further exchanges of wonderful weapons between the two heroes. But ultimately Karṇa was overpowered and he failed to drag up the car-wheel. Vāsudeva asked Pārtha to cut off with his *añjalika* arrow the head of Karṇa before he succeeded in getting upon his car. "Applauding those words of the lord Vāsudeva", and while the wheel of his enemy was still sunk, the mighty car-warrior Arjuna took up a razor-headed arrow of blazing effulgence and cut off the standard of Karṇa. That great car-warrior behoding the standerd cut off lost all hopes of victory. "Cut off with Arjuna's arrow, and deprived of life, the tall trunk of Karṇa endued with great splendour, with blood issuing from every wound, fell down like the thunder-riven summit of a mountain of red chalk with crimson streams running adown its sides after a shower (fig. 260). Then from that body of the fallen Karṇa a light passing through the welkin penetrated the Sun. The head of Karṇa fell down along with his body. Krishṇa and Dhanañjaya were filled with delight, and losing no time, blew their conches. In great delight the Pāṇḍava army blew their trumpets and waved their arms and garments. The death of Karṇa took place during the afternoon of the day. After the fall of Karṇa, the Kauravas, afflicted with fear, fled away from the field. When Karṇa fell, the river stood still, the sun lost its hue, the earth uttered loud roars, and violent winds began to blow."

After the fall of Karṇa, Duryodhana became the very picture of woe. But he was still hopeful of victory, and he asked his army to give a fight. But Bhīma and Dhrishṭadyumna encompassed the Kuru army, already deprived of horses, elephants and chariots. Afraid of Bhīma, Dhrishṭadyumna and Arjuna, the Kuru soldiers were flying hither and thither. But Duryodhana, fighting alone and unsupported, fought with all the Pāṇḍavas united together.

After Karṇa had fallen, Keśava and Dhanañjaya went to report the death of Karṇa to Yudhishṭhira.

As Yudhishṭhira came to know of Karṇa's death, he, filled with great joy, worshipped that hero of Dāśārha's race (i.e. Krishṇa) and said that it was not wonderful that Arjuna having obtained him (Krishṇa) as charioteer had won Karṇa, and Yudhishṭhira further said that Nārada had told him that Arjuna and Krishṇa were Nara and Nārāyaṇa. And it is through the influence of Krishṇa that Arjuna could vanquish the foes (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Karṇa Parva*, Section XCVI, p. 266).

After the fall of Karṇa, Duryodhana was plunged into deep grief and he appointed Śalya as the Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava army. It was the 17th day of the battle. Seeing their weak position, Kripāchārya advised Duryodhana to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas. But Duryodhana did not agree to it, and a fierce fight continued between the Kurus and Śriñjayas. Śalya rushed towards Yudhishṭhira when the Pāṇḍava army advanced against him; he bravely stood against them, but he was defeated by Bhīma in a wrestling bout. Then followed a fierce battle between Śalya and Yudhishṭhira. Though Śalya was fighting very bravely and caused a great carnage in battle, he ultimately succumbed to Yudhishṭhira's attack. The Kaurava side sustained a heavy loss and many of their soldiers including Śakuni fled away. Sahadeva pursued Śakuni and killed him. When the followers of Śakuni proceeded towards Sahadeva, Arjuna with his Gāṇḍīva baffled their purpose. King Duryodhana was filled with rage and collectedt he remnants of his forces and urged them to fight the Pāṇḍavas. But they were killed by the Pāṇḍavas and Śriñjayas. Only Kripāchārya, Kritavarmā, Aśvatthāmā and Duryodhana, exceedingly wounded, were alive. Duryodhana abandoned the field and fled

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away east and hid himself in a lake. Sañjaya met Kripāchārya, Aśvatthāmā and Kritavarmā and informed them of Duryodhana's whereabouts. They proceeded towards the lake to rescue the king. The Pāṇḍavas desirious of victory also searched for Duryodhana. Kripa and the other two warriors of the Kaurava side met Duryodhana and assured him the destruction of the Pāṇḍava army. Some hunters who were passing by that side to procure meat for Bhīmasena overheard the talk between Duryodhana and Kripa, Aśvatthāmā and Kritavarmā and duly reported this to Bhīma. At once the Pāṇḍavas, along with Krishṇa proceeded tither.

The Pāṇḍavas arrived at the lake in which Duryodhana was resting, solidifying the waters with illusion. Vāsudeva said to Yudhishṭhira, "With thy own powers of illusion, Oh Bhārata, destroy this illusion of Duryodhana who is adept in it. One conversant with illusion should be slain with illusion." As advised by Krishṇa, Yudhishṭhira by using appropriate words provoked Duryodhana to come out of the lake and fight with the Pāṇḍavas. He selected Bhīma as his opponent in the Gadā Yuddha (fighting with mace) (*Gada Yuddlha Parva*).

Bhīma was physically stronger than Duryodhana, but the latter, however, had greater skill in the practice of *gadā*, and both of them were disciples of Balarāma. When the fierce fight was about to commence between Duryodhana and Bhīma and when the Pāṇḍavas took their seats, Balarāma, who was out on pilgrimage when the Bhārata battle was going on, came there. Krishṇa, Yudhishṭhira, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva saluted him. Duryodhana and Bhīmasena also saluted him with lifted maces in their hands. Balarāma took his seat there to witness the battle.

A fierce fight started between Bhīma and Duryodhana. Beholding the fight Arjuna asked Vāsudeva as to the superiority of each of the two fighters. Vāsudeva said, "The instruction received by them hath been equal. Bhīma, however, is possessed of greater might while the son of Dhritarāshṭra (i.e. Duryodhana) is possessed of greater skill and hath laboured more. If he were to fight fairly, Bhīmasena will never succeed in winning the victory. Therefore, let Bhīmasena put forth his prowess, aided by deception. If the mighty-armed Bhīmasena does not slay him unfairly, the son of Dhritarāshṭra will surely remain king." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit., Śalya Parva*). Hearing this, Arjuna struck his own left thigh before the eyes of Bhīmasena. Bhīmasena understood the significance of this. As the fight continued, both showed great skill and heroism. Once when Duryodhana jumped to overcome Bhīmasena, the latter fiercely hurled his mace at the thigh of Duryodhana. The thigh of Duryodhana was fractured and he fell down on earth. Bhīma struck the head of Duryodhana with his foot. Once more with his mace he struck with his left foot the head of the Kuru king who lay stricken on the earth (fig. 261). Though Yudhishṭhira was happy at Bhīma's victory, he expressed his disapproval of Bhīma's placing the foot on Duryodhana who was a king.

Bhīma defeated Duryodhana by striking his thighs which was an unjust act, not sanctioned by rule. This enraged Balarāma, who was, however, pacified by Krishṇa.

Thereafter the Pāṇḍavas, along with Krishṇa, proceeded in cars to the camp of Duryodhana. Reaching the pavilion they dismounted from the car. Krishṇa asked Arjuna to dismount from his car first and next Krishṇa left it. Then the top of the vehicle which was already burnt by the celestial weapons of Droṇa and Karṇa quickly blazed forth into ashes. Beholding this the Pāṇḍavas in wonder asked Krishṇa about it. Vāsudeva said, "That car, O Arjuna, had before been consumed by diverse kinds of weapons. It was because I sat upon it during battle that it did not fall into pieces." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit., Śalya Parva*, Section LXII, pp. 170 ff).

The defeat of Duryodhana (who possessed an adamantine frame) by Bhīma was a wonderful feat.

Kripa, Kritavarmā, and Aśvatthāmā leaving the battle field proceeded towards the south and entered a deep forest containing a huge banian tree. Tired and heavy with sleep, Kripa and Kritavarmā slept on the bare ground. Aśvatthāmā alone was awake scheming the destruction of the Pāṇḍavas.

Aśvatthāmā thought that the enemy's force should be destroyed even when they were asleep at the dead of night. Having reflected in that way, Aśvatthāmā took the resolution of slaying during the night the slumbering Pañchālas and Pāṇḍavas. Aśvatthāmā did not brook any delay and he yoked his steeds to his car to rush against the Pañchālas. Though unwillingly, Kripa and Kritavarmā followed him and reached the gate of the Pāṇḍava camp, guarded by Śiva. Aśvatthāmā pleased Śiva by his praises. He gave his sword to Aśvatthāmā and disappeared into his body. Aśvatthāmā entered into the camp and found the Pañchālas including Dhriṣṭadyumna asleep. Aśvatthāmā kicked Dhrishṭadyumna to death and slew others with the *Rudra* weapon. He moved in the camp like Yama himself and at last he saw the children of Draupadī and the remnants of the Somakas. The son of Droṇa sent to the abode of Yama all the Pāṇḍus and Śriñjayas who were without armour and weapons. Those persons who sought to fly away were

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killed at the gate by Kripa and Kritavarmā. After completing the nocturnal slaughter, they left the Pāṇḍava camp and came to the place where Duryodhana lay with his broken thighs, and his life was about to ebb away. Aśvatthāmā told Duryodhana of the slaughter of the Pāṇḍavas and the Pañchālas. He said that on the Pāṇḍava side there were only five Pāṇḍavas and Vāsudeva and Sātyaki and on the Kaurava side there were Kripa, Kritavarmā and Aśvatthāmā. When Duryodhana came to know of the death of Dhrishṭadyumna and Śikhaṇḍī, he cast off his grief and died. Laden with grief Draupadī sent Bhīma to pursue Aśvatthāmā and punish him for his misdeeds. Krishṇa also mounted upon his excellent car with the Garuḍa standard. Bhīma discovered Aśvatthāmā sitting with the Rishis including Vyāsa on the bank of the Bhāgīrathī. Janārdana arrived there with Arjuna. Seeing them, Aśvatthāmā took up a blade of grass and inspired it with *mantras* and converted it into a mighty celestial weapon which he got from Droṇa and he let it off which was capable of consuming the three worlds. To this weapon Keśava asked Arjuna to throw his celestial weapon which blazed up with fierce flames. As a result of the use of celestial weapons both by Aśvatthāmā and Arjuna, the earth trembled. Arjuna could withdraw his weapon because of his *Brahmacharya*. Droṇa's son, however, could not withdraw it. Vyāsa requested Aśvatthāmā to withdraw his weapon which he could not. He, however, parted with his *maṇi* for the Pāṇḍavas which would save them from the *Brahmāstra*. But Aśvatthāmā's *Brahmāstra* affected the womb of Uttarā bearing the foetus of her child (Parīkshit).

Krishṇa said to Aśvatthāmā, "The fall of this mighty weapon will not be fruitful. The foetus will die. But being dead, it will live again and have a long life". (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Sauptika Parva*, Section XVII, p. 37).

Then Bhīma, Arjuna and Krishṇa came to Draupadī and narrated to her all that had happened. Draupadī asked Yudhishṭhira to wear the *maṇi* on his head.

The Kurukshetra battle was a great tragedy. Eighteen *akshauhiṇīs* of soldiers were slain and the earth became almost desolate. The kings of the different parts of the country who joined the war lost their lives. Dhritarāshṭra whose hundred sons were killed broke down in sorrow. Both Sañjaya and Vidura consoled him with appropriate words. They asked him to dispel his sorrow as one does not gain anything by indulging in grief. Even while hearing Vidura's words Dhritarāshṭra fell into a swoon. Even the words of Vyāsa had little effect on him. Then at the advice of Vidura who said that Dhritarāshṭra's sons attained heaven as they were killed in a battle, Dhritarāshṭra, accompanied by Gāndhārī, Kuntī and other Kuru ladies, arranged for the necessary rites to be performed for their sons, relatives and husbands, who were killed in the battle.

Dhritarāshṭra was very soon met by the Pāṇḍavas and Śri Krishṇa. When Dhritarāshṭra expressed his desire to embrace Bhīma for his bravery, Krishṇa brought an iron replica before Dhritarāshṭra. The latter was very strong, though old, and he embraced it so pressingly that it was broken into pieces. Thinking that Bhīma is dead, Dhritarāshṭra began to lament. Krishṇa then said, "Do not grieve, O Dhritarāshṭra, for thou hast not killed Bhīma. That is an iron statue, O King, which has been broken by thee. Understanding that thou wert filled with rage, I dragged the son of Kuntī away and placed before you an iron statue." Krishṇa further told Dhritarāshṭra that the latter did not listen to him when he gave good advice for the benefit of both the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas and the result was this destruction. That which has befallen the old king was entirely due to his own fault.

Then Pāṇḍava brothers accompanied by Krishṇa proceeded to see Gāndhārī who was chaste and absolutely devoted to her husband. The Pāṇḍavas were afraid of Gāndhārī's curses as she was overwhelmed with grief at the death of her hundred sons. She was really angry with Bhīma who had killed all her sons and Yudhishṭhira, the head of the Pāṇḍavas. She accused Krishṇa as being indifferent to the great carnage of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas and cursed him saying, "On the thirty-sixth year from this, O slayer of Madhu, thou shalt, after causing the slaughter of thy kinsmen and friends and sons perish by disgustful means within the wilderness. The ladies of thy race deprived of sons, kinsmen and friends shall weep and cry ever as the ladies of the Bhārata race." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Strī Parva*, Section XXV, pp. 37 ff).

Yudhishṭhira was installed on the throne. Vāsudeva anointed him King with the sacred water of Pāñchajanya. Thereafter he peformed the *śrāddha* rites of all the relatives who lost their lives in the battle. The obsequies were performed on the bank of the Bhāgīrathī. At that time Kuntī disclosed to Yudhishṭhira that Karṇa was their elder brother. This news plunged Yudhishṭhira into deep grief. Everyday his pain of mind increased. Nobody could comfort him. He, in the company of Vāsudeva, Dhritarāshṭra and others, came to see where Bhīshma was lying on the bed of arrows. Bhīshma asked him to shed remorse, because everything was in the hands of God, fate and time and advised him to go to Hastināpura and rule his kingdom justly.

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Having got back the kingdom, Yudhishṭhira addressed Krishṇa thus, "Through thy grace, O Krishṇa, through thy policy, might and intelligence and prowess, O tiger among the Yadus, I have got back this ancestral kingdom of mine. Salutations to thee, O Creator of the universe! Thou art the soul of the universe and the universe had sprung from thee." Thus eulogised by Yudhishṭhira Krishṇa was pleased and gladdened the heart of Yudhishṭhira with many agreeable speeches. (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Śānti Prava*, Section XLIV, p. 91).

One day, Yudhishṭhira went to see Vāsudeva but found him rapt in meditation. Yudhishṭhira asked him the reason of this meditation. Vāsudeva said that his mind was concentrated on Bhīshma who was thinking of him. Bhīshma's end was near, so Yudhishṭhira should go and ask him what he might desire to learn from him. Lying on the bed of arrows, Bhīshma with pure heart thought of Krishṇa in mind, word and act, and he adored Vāsudeva thus: 'O Krishṇa, O foremost of Beings, be thou pleased with these words which I utter, in brief and in detail, from the desire of hymning thy praises! Thou art the Supreme Lord. With my whole heart I seek thy refuge, O universal Soul and Lord of all creatures! Thou art without beginning and without end. Thou art the highest of the high and Brahmā. Neither the gods nor the Rishis know thee! The divine Creator, called Nārāyaṇa or Hari, alone knows thee. Thou art called Hari, of a thousand heads, thousand feet, thousand eyes, thousand arms, thousand crowns, and thousand faces of great splendour. Thou art called Nārāyaṇa, divinity, and the refuge of the universe! Thou art of quardruple soul. Thou art displayed in only the understanding (of all creatures). Thou art the Lord of those that are bound to thee in faith. For this eternal salvation, the devout worshipper, with mind withdrawn from everything else and casting off all desires, beholds thee, O Govinda, that art the pure Soul. Thou transcendest Sūrya in glory. Thou art beyond the ken of the senses and the understanding. O lord of all creatures I place myself in thy hands! In the *Purāṇas* thou hast been spoken of as Purusha (all-pervading spirit)... Thou hast yet been born in innumerable forms. Thou hast thy passions under complete control. Thy devout worshippers, faithfully performing the rites laid down in the scriptures, sacrifice to thee, O giver of every wish! Thou art Truth. Thou art One and undeteriorating. Thou art Brahma. Thou art that which is beyond Mind and Matter. Thou art self-created. Thou art eternal. Thou art invisible and beyond ken. Thou art called Hari and Nārāyaṇa, O puissant one. The *Vedas* declare thee to be the Creator of the universe and the Lord of everything existing in the universe. Thou art the Supremest protector of the universe. The man, however, that bows to Krishṇa escapes rebirth. They that have Krishṇa for their vow, they that think of Krishṇa in the night, and upon rising from sleep, may be said to have Krishṇa for their body... Salutations to thee that dispellest the fear of hell, to thee, O Vishnu, that art a boat unto them that are plunged amidst the eddies of the ocean represented by worldly life! Thyself without origin, O Vishṇu, thou art the origin of knowledge and penances. Thus art thou praised! O Janārdana, thus worshipped by me in the Sacrifice constituted by Speech (alone), be, O god, gratified with me! (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Śānti Parva*, Section XLVIII, pp 97 and 98).

Vāsudeva asked Bhishma to expound the kings' duties and the duties of the four castes to Yudhisthira. He granted Bhīshma a boon so that he forgot the pain of arrow wounds.

Next day Yudhishṭhira accompanied by Vāsudeva came to see Bhīshma to receive instructions in the duties of the king. Bhīshma enlightend the king on the *Rāja-dharma*, four-fold *āśramas*, duties of Kshatriyas, guarding against anarchy, on the employment of spies, on the *daṇḍanīti*, on the military campaigns, on the shortcomings to be avoided by the kings, on the relationship between the the kings, the Brāhmaṇs and Kshatriyas, on the selection of ministers, characteristics of a heroic fighter, war and peace and various other topics. He described in detail also on the incarnations of Vishṇu, including the Krishṇa-avatāra. Bhīshma also spoke to Dhritarāshṭra and asked him to shed remorse and go back to Hastināpura.

Yudhishṭhira was anxious to hear from Bhīshma the glories of Mahādeva. Bhīshma said that it was not possible for him to describe the virtues of Mahādeva who pervades all things in the Universe and yet who is not seen anywhere. It was Krishṇa alone, who gratified Mahādeva in every *Yuga* with great devotion, who could comprehend the glories of Mahādeva. It is through the propitiation of Mahādeva that Krishṇa got the sons, Pradyumna and others by Rukmiṇī. When Jāmbavatī asked Krishṇa to have a son on her, he went to the Himalayas to propitiate Mahādeva. On the Himalayas Krishṇa met Upamanyu and told him the reason of his coming to the Himalayas. Upamanyu, an ardent devotee of Śiva assured him the fulfilment of his desire through the grace of Śiva. He recited the thousand and eight names of Śiva. Krishṇa also praised the greatness of Śiva and got the desired boon. On the other hand, Śaṅkara also, as requested by Nārada and other sages, described to them the glories of Vāsudeva as the eternal Purusha, who should be adored by all (please see the long compliments paid by Śiva to Krishṇa in the 14th chapter of the *Anuśāsana Parva*). Bhīshma also

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described the thousand names of Vishṇu (Krishṇa) to Yudhishṭhira (this is the well-known *Vishṇu Sahasranāma* on which Śaṅkarāchārya also wrote a commentary). (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Anuśāsana Parva*, Section CXLIX, pp. 327 ff).

Krishṇa was a great respecter of the Brāhmaṇs. His service to Durvāsas is an apt example of this. Once Durvāsas came to Krishṇa's abode. The sage, who was of erratic nature would order now for this food and immediately next for some other food. He was never satisfied with anything. Once he yoked Rukmiṇī to a car and made her drag it. As the irresistible sage proceeded on the car, Rukmiṇī tottered on the road and often fell down on the ground. But Krishṇa did not protest against it. Durvāsas was pleased at this and blessed both Krishṇa and. Rukmiṇī (*Ibid.*, p. 381).

Bhīshma was still lying on the bed of arrows, and Vyāsa, Nārada, Devala were waiting on him. The sun was making his northward course and Bhīshma was lying on his bed for eight and fifty nights. The month of Māgha had come. Having addressed Yudhishṭhira and Dhritarāshṭra, Bhīshma said to Vāsudeva, "O holy one, O god of all gods, O thou art worshipped by all deities and Asuras, O thou didst cover the three worlds with three steps of thine, salutation to thee, O wielder of the conch, the discus and the mace! Thou art Vāsudeva, thou art of golden body, thou art the one Purusha (or active agent), thou art the creator of the Universe, thou art of vast proportions. Thou art Jīva. Thou art subtle. Thou art the supreme and Universal Soul. Do thou, O lotus-eyed one, rescue me, O foremost of all beings, Do thou give me permission, O Krishṇa to depart from this world ... The celestial Rishi Nārada told me this as also Vyāsa of austere penances. Even they have said unto me this that Thyself and Arjuna are old Rishis, Nārāyaṇa and Nara born among men. Do thou, O Krishṇa grant me leave, I shall cast off my body, permitted by thee I shall attain to the highest end." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Anuśāsana Parvn*, Section, CLXVII, pp. 393 ff).

Vāsudeva assured Bhīshma that he would attain to the status of the Vasus. Bhīshma embraced Yudhishṭhira and asked him to stick to righteous conduct saying that truth constitutes the highest power.

Yudhishṭhira was very much afflicted at heart on account of the death of a very large number of Kshatriyas in the Kurukshetra battle. He considered himself to be responsible for the massacre of his kinsmen, including Bhīshma who had brought them up, Droṇa who was their preceptor and Karṇa, who, as it was revealed to him, though quite late, was his first uterine brother. He broke down just like an elephant pierced with an arrow by a hunter. Dhritarāshṭra, Krishṇa and Vyāsa tried their best to console him, but to no avail. Krishṇa pointed out to Yudhishṭhira that nobody should lament too much over the death of his kinsmen. Such lamentations torment the souls of the dead. As expiation, Vyāsa advised Yudhishṭhira to perform sacrifices such as the *Rājasūya*, *Sarvamedha* and *Aśvamedha*. As directed by Vyāsa he decided to celebrate the Aśvamedha and discussed with his friends the arrangements for the performance of the sacrifice.

Consoled by Krishṇa, Vedavyāsa, and Nārada, and by Bhīma, Sahadeva, Arjuna and Draupadī as well as by others well-versed in *Śāstras*, Yudhishṭhira overcame his sorrow. He also set himself to the preparations for the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice.

Vāsudeva was heartily pleased with the victory achieved by the Pāṇḍavas in the war and spent some days in merriment in the company of Arjuna at Indraprastha

One day when Arjuna and Krishṇa were seated in the assembly hall of the Pāṇḍavas, Arjuna addressed Krishṇa thus, "Madhusūdana, it is during the Kurukshetra battle that I could know of your real greatness. You were pleased also to show me your universal form. Unfortunately because of my fickle-mindedness I have forgotten what you had told me at that time. I am curious on the subject again, as you will be shortly leaving for Dvārakā." Krishṇa said to him, "Well Arjuna, I imparted to you the eternal mysteries but I am sorry that you have failed to retain all that I said to you. It appears to me that you are destitute of faith and devotion. I am unable to narrate all that I told you then. I shall, however, narrate an old history upon the same topic." The instructions delivered to Arjuna now are known as the *Anugītā*, i.e. the recapitulation of the *Bhagavadgītā*. In conformity with the subject, it emphasises the performance of the duties of different castes, the concentration of mind and the practice of piety which lead to emancipation. God Nārāyaṇa is the self of everything. "Those who are far-sighted have no attachment for actions. This being is stated to be full of knowledge and not full of action (cf. Telang, *Gīta*, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. VIII, p. 118). The self-restrained man who thus understands the immortal, changeless, incomprehensible and ever indestructible and unattached (principle), he dies not. He who thus understands the self to which there is nothing prior, which is uncreated, changeless, unmoving which is imcomprehensible (even to those who feed on nectar) he certainly becomes immortal. Expelling all impressions and restraining the self in the self, he under-

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stands that holy Brahman than which nothing greater exists' (Telang, *op. cit.*, p. 391).

The *Anugītā* consists of thirty-six chapters. But it is interesting to note that only the first four chapters are known by the name of *Anugītā*, the next fifteen the *Brāhmaṇa Gītā* and the last seventeen as the *Guru-Śishya Saṁvāda*. Though there are three distinct sections, they are harmonised so as to call the whole popularly as the *Anugītā*. The *Anugītā* contains a statement of the miseries of birth, etc., as a protest against worldly life, the *Brāhmaṇa Gītā* eulogises *prāṇāyāma*, etc., and 'in the *Guru-Śśishya-saṁvāda* we have a eulogium on the perception of the self as distinct from *Prakriti* or nature, and incidentally a protest against *Pravritti* or action'. (Telang, *op. cit.*, p. 201).

After this event Krishṇa and Arjuna left for Hastināpura to see Yudhishṭhira. On the way Arjuna told Vāsudeva, "O high-souled one, it is through your help and grace that Yudhishṭhira has been able to obtain victory in the war and conquer the kingdom. It is through your grace that all the enemies have perished and our kingdom has been free from enemies. You are our great help and resort. We have been able to cross the worst ocean of the Kurukshetra battle with your help. You have been our boat to enable us to cross this ocean... You are the universal soul and I bow down to you. I have heard of your stories from Nārada, Asita. Devala, Vyāsadeva and from the grandfather, Bhīshma. You are the supreme reality. I will act according to your advice. Because of your help Duryodhna could be killed. It is your advice and your action that made us victorious. You revealed to us the secret as to how Bhūriśravā could be killed". (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Aśvamedha Parva*, Section LII). On reaching Hastināpura, Krishṇa and Arjuna spent the night happily. Krishṇa slept along with Arjuna on the same bed. Next day Krishṇa asked for Yudhishṭhira's permission to go back to Dvārakā. Yudhishṭhira heartily agreed to Krishṇa's proposal and said, "O Vāsudeva, I endorse your desire that you should go now to Dvārakā where you will be able to meet your parents, your brother, Baladeva and others. Reaching Dvārakā, please do not forget us; and when I shall perform the Aśvamedha sacrifice, it is my earnest request that you should come to Hastināpura again. It is through your help that we have destroyed the enemies and obtained our kingdom. You may now start for Dvārakā." Then Madhusūdana with the permission of Kunti, Yudhishṭhira and others, took his own sister Subhadrā along with him and left for Dvārakā. He was followed by Sātyaki, Arjuna, Bhimasena, Vidura, Nakula, Sahadeva and others. After going some distance, Krishṇa asked them to go back to Hastināpura and he asked Dāruka and Sātyaki to proceed to Dvārakā with a great speed (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Aśvamedha Parva*, Section LII).

When Krishṇa came to the country of Marudhanvā, he met the sage Uttaṅka. He came down from his chariot and worshipped the sage. The sage Uttaṅka asked him, "O Vāsudeva, you went to mediate peace between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. I hope you have been successful in your mission. I hope both the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas are living in peace." Krishṇa said to Uttaṅka, "O sage, I did my best to establish peace between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas but the Kauravas did not listen to my advice and they have been exterminated completely. Neither the intelligence nor the prowess can overcome destiny. After the Pāṇḍavas completed their period of exile, Bhīshma, Vidura and I advised Duryodhana to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas but they did not listen to our advice. The result is that they have perished. In that devastating war, the Pāṇḍavas also have lost all their sons and friends. Only Yudhishṭhira and his brothers alone are alive."

Hearing this, the sage Uttaṅka was enraged and said, "O Krishṇa, you alone were able to help the Kauravas to make peace but you have not done so. It is through your deceit that the Kurus have been exterminated. So, I am cursing you." Vāsudeva who was a great respecter of Brāhmaṇas, said, "O sage, I entreat you not to curse me. I will now describe to you the highest spiritual subjects. Please control your anger. It is not possible to overcome me very easily. O sage, it is to uphold justice that I have assumed different forms in different times. I am Brahmā, Vishṇu, Indra and I am the source of origin and destruction of all. Age after age I have assumed forms to destroy the unrighteous. When I assume the form of God, I behave as God, when I am born as a Gandharva, I behave as a Gandharva, when I am born as a man or a Yaksha, I act accordingly. Before the Kurukshetra war started, I earnestly approached the Kauravas and stressed the need of avoiding the war and establishing peace. They did not pay any heed to my advice. Being displeased with them, I showed my universal form to them, but nothing convinced them. They have, however, fought the battle bravely, as the Kshatriyas should do, and they have attained the heaven which is due to Kshatriyas who die fighting." (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Aśvamedha Parva*, Sections LIII and LIV).

Uttaṅka understood the greatness of Krishṇa, forgot his anger and entreated him to show him his *Viśvarūpa*. When the high-souled Uttaṅka thus requested Krishṇa, the latter showed the *Virāṭarūpa* to him as he had showed it to Arjuna. Uttaṅka saw Vāsudeva endowed with thousand arms and faces on

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all sides. His form filled all the space and it was as radiant as a thousand suns. Uttaṅka bowed down to Krishṇa and requested him to withdraw his all-embracing form and assume his human form (*Ibid.*, Section LV).

After meeting Uttaṅka, Krishṇa proceeded towards Dvārakā on his chariot driven by swift horses and reached in time the vicinity of the city. At that time the Yādavas were celebrating a festival on the Raivataka mountain. Krishṇa also came to Raivataka and joined the celebrations and thereafter he came to Dvārakā and met his parents and other kinsmen. As desired by his father he narrated in brief the events of the Kurukshetra war. He reported to Vasudeva the death of Bhīshma, Droṇa, Karṇa, Śalya, Duryodhana and others of the Kaurava side. Of the Pāṇḍava army, he said that none other than the five Pāṇḍavas and Sātyaki were alive. As Krishṇa did not say anything about the death of Abhimanyu (Krishṇa remained silent on this tragic event as its mention was bound to cause a great grief to Vasudeva), Subhadrā broke the news of her son Abhimanu's death to Vasudeva. Hearing of this, Vasudeva was stricken with grief. Krishṇa consoled his father saying that Abhimanyu had fought bravely with Droṇa, Karṇa and others and at the end he lost his life in the battle. He performed the Kshatriya's duties bravely and there was no doubt that he had attained heaven as a result of this.

As the time passed Yudhishṭhira overcame his sorrow and arranged for the horse sacrifice. As advised by Vyāsa, the Pāṇḍavās set out to obtain the vast treasures left at the Himalayas where Marutta performed his sacrifice (Marutta offered so much gold to the Brāhmaṇas at his sacrifice that the Brāhmaṇas could not carry all of it). All that was left by the Brāhmaṇas lay buried at the spot. By pleasing Mahādeva, Yudhishṭhira obtained this vast wealth and came back to Hastināpura to perform the Aśvamedha. Vāsudeva was invited by Yudhishṭhira to attend the the Aśvamedha Sacrifice (figs. 263 and 264) and accordingly he accompanied by Baladeva, Subhadrā, Pradyumna, Yuyudhāna, Chāruadeshṇa, Sāmba, Gada, Kritavarmā, and others arrived at Hastināpura to witness the Aśvamedha Sacrifice. They were duly received by Dhritarāshṭra, Vidura and Yuyutsu, etc. (fig. 265).

At that very moment Uttarā delivered Parīkshit as a still-born child. Everyone was overwhelmed with grief at this incident (as it was narrated before, the womb of Uttarā carrying Parīkshit was affected by the *Brahmāstra* of Aśvatthāmā). Accompanied by Yuyutsu, the high-souled Krishṇa entered the inner appartments and found Kuntī, Draupadī, Subhadrā and others weeping. They all entreated him to save the child. Kuntī said, "You are our sole resort, our family has been saved by you. Parīkshit as a result of Aśvatthāmā's *Ishikāstra* is born dead. It is your duty to restore him to life. This child is the only one to confer spiritual benefits on our souls after our death. The Kuru family can continue only through this child."

Subhadrā said, "O Vāsudeva, you alone can revive the child, you are virtuous and truthful. If you like, you can give life to the three worlds. I am aware of your power and greatness".

Thus earnestly requested by Kuntī and Subhadrā, Vāsudeva agreed to revive Parīkshit and entered the place where Parīkshit was born. The helpless Uttarā seeing her child born dead indulged in piteous lamentation and requested Vāsudeva to revive the child. Krishṇa of unfading glory, touched water and withdrew the force of the *Brahmāstra* and said these words: "O Uttarā, I never utter an untruth. My words will prove true. I shall revive the child in the presence of all creatures. Never before have I uttered an untruth even in jest. Never have I turned back from battle. (By the merit of those acts) let this child revive. As righteousness is dear to me, as Brāhmaṇas are spritually dear to me (by the merit of the disposition of mine), let Abhimanyu's son, who is born dead, revive .... Let this child revive by that truth. As truth and righteousness are always established in me, let this child of Abhimanyu revive (by the merit of these). As Kamsa and Keśi have been righteously slain by me, let this child revive today by that truth". (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Aśvamedha Parva*, Section LXIX, p. 121). After these wods were uttered by Vāsudeva that child became animate and began gradually to move. The laying-in room was illuminated and the Bhārata ladies were filled with joy. The Brāhmaṇas uttered benedictions. All the ladies praised Janāradana. Janārdana who always adhered to truth bestowed the name Parīkshit on the child who saved the race from becoming extinct (fig. 268).

When Parīkshit was one month old, the Pāṇḍavas came back to the city with great wealth. Krishṇa went out to receive them. The Pāṇḍavas then along with Krishṇa entered the city. A few days after Vyāsa came to Yudhishṭhira and asked him to start the Aśvamedha.

The Pāṇḍavas could win the Bhārata battle and subjugate all with the aid and intelligence of Krishṇa. Out of gratitude Yudhishṭhira approached Krishṇa with the request that it would be most befitting if Krishṇa in his (Yudhishṭhira's) place agreed to undergo the rites of initiating himself to the sacrifice. Yudhishṭhira said, "O Krishṇa, if you perform

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the sacrifice, I shall be free from every sin. You are the sacrifice. You are indestructible and you are the goal of all creatures." While acknowledging Yudhishṭhira's noble sentiments Krishṇa asked him to undergo the rites of initiation and perform the sacrifice.

When the time for sacrifice came, Yudhishṭhira at the advice of Vyāsa asked Arjuna to set out with the sacrificial horse for conquests. He advised Arjuna to avoid conflict as far as possible. The sacrificial horse was let loose and Dhanañjaya followed it. The horse roamed freely over the earth. In the course of the horse's wandering many battles were fought by Arjuna with various kings and tribes. A fierce battle also took place between him and the Trigartas. But the opponents were all defeated by him.

The sacrificial horse wandered to Prāgjyotishapura and then came to Sindhudeśa. Thse countries submitted to Arjuna after an initial challenge.

In the course of time the sacrificial horse came to Manipur which was the kingdom of Vabhruvāhana, the son of Arjuna by Chitrāṅgadā. Vabhruvāhana at first approached Arjuna with the idea of submitting to him. But Arjuna admonished him for this cowardly attitude and provoked him to fight. Then a fierce fight ensued between the father and son. Arjuna was defeated and killed. He was, however, revived with the help of a jewel which Ulūpī, another wife of Arjuna brought. Arjuna left Manipur after inviting Vabhruvāhana, Chitrāṅgadā and Ulūpī to the sacrifice.

According to certain traditions when Arjuna was defeated by Vabhruvāhana, Krishṇa, accompanied by Kuntī and others, came to Manipur (fig. 266). These events do not occur in the original *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsadeva.

The horse then came to Magadha. After a fight the king of Magadha submitted to Arjuna.

Then Arjuna passed victoriously through many other territories, including the kingdoms of the Chedīs, Kaśī, Aṅga, Kosala, Kirāta, Daśārṇa, Nishāda, Drāviḍa, Āndhra, Surāshtra, Dvārakā, Pūnjab, Gandhāra, etc. The Jaiminī *Aśvamedha Parva* recounts the adventures of the horse in various other places including the kingdoms of Yuvanāśva and Tāmradhvaja (figs. 262, and 265-267).

In the course of time, Arjuna returned safely to Hastināpura and the sacrifice was duly performed.

At the conclusion of the sacrifice, Yudhishṭhira gave away millions of gold coins as *dakshiṇā* to the Brāhmaṇas. Unto the kings who attended the sacrifice he made presents of jewels and gems, elephants and horses, clothes and ornaments and coins of gold. Then he duly worshipped the high-souled Govinda, Baladeva of great prowess and other Vrishṇi heroes with Pradyumna as their head, all of whom returned to Dvārakā with great satisfaction.

When the thirty-sixth year of Yudhishṭhira's reign was reached, a great calamity overtook the Vrishṇis. Cursed by the sages, the Vrishṇis the Andhakas and the Bhojas met with destruction as a result of the curse of the Brāhmaṇas. One day the Vrishṇis had met Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva and Nārada at Dvarakā. In order to make pranks with them, the Vrishṇi heroes disguised Sāmba (son of Krishṇa by Jāmvavatī) as a woman and said, "This one is the wife of Vabhru of immeasurable energy who is desirous of having a son. Ye, Rishis, do you know for certain what this one will bring forth"? (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Maushala Parva*, pp. 2 ff.). Enraged at this trick the sage said that the disguised person who was none other than Sāmba, son of Vāsudeva, would bring forth an iron bolt which will cause the destruction of the Yādavas, except Rāma and Keśava. Balarāma after casting off his body, will enter the ocean and a hunter named Jarā will pierce the sole of the feet of the high-souled Vāsudeva with an arrow. Saying this the Rishis went to Krishṇa and informed him of what had happened. Knowing that the end of his race was near, he did not like to ordain it otherwise. Next day Sāmba actually delivered an iron-bolt for the destruction of the Vrishṇis and Andhakas. When the matter was brought to the notice of Ugrasena, he ordered the iron bolt to be reduced into fine powder and cast into the sea. The order was also promulgated that nobody would manufacture any wines and spirits.

The Vrishṇis and Andhakas thus tried to avoid any calamity. But ominous signs appeared in Dvārakā, and many unusual things happened. Seeing all this Hrishīkeśa (Krishṇa) summoned all the Yādavas and said, "The fourteenth lunation has been made the fifteenth by Rāhu once more. Such a day had happened at the time of the great battle of the Bhāratas. It has once more appeared, it seems, for our destruction." Vāsudeva understood that it would now happen as Gāndhārī, afflicted with grief at the death of her sons and kinsmen had cursed. Knowing all this for certain Krishṇa wanted to bring about those circumstances which would make Gāndhārī's words true, and he asked his kinsmen to make a pilgrimage to a sea-coast for bathing in the sacred water of the ocean.

Terrible events then began to occur. The

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ornaments, umbrellas, and armour of the Yādava heroes were seen being taken away by the Rākshasas. The iron discus of Vāsudeva, given by Agni, ascended into firmament in the very sight of all. His excellent car was taken away by the horses yoked into it, in the very sight of Dāruka. The two great standards of Krishṇa's car and Baladeva's car, i.e. Garuḍa and palmyra, which were worshipped by the Yādavas were taken away by the *Apsarās*. When these omens were seen, the Vrishṇis and Andhakas with their wives proceeded to Prabhāsa and took their abode on the sea-coast. The wise Uddhava (Krishṇa's friend), bent on departing from the world, came to take leave of Krishṇa. Krishṇa readily gave his permission, knowing that the time for the destruction of the Yādavas had come. Everyone saw Uddhava proceeding to the higher region filling the sky with splendour.

On the other hand, the Yādava heroes began to indulge in wine at Prabhāsa. Balarāma, Kritavarmā, Sātyaki, Gada and Vabhru, all began to drink in the very sight of Krishṇa. Kritavarmā and Sātyaki quarrelled with each other, referring to their family feuds and some of their acts in the Bhārata war. Pradyumna sided with Sātyaki. The quarrel gradually deepened. Sātyaki rushed to Kritavarmā and severed his head with a sword. Thereupon the Bhojas and Andhakas fell upon Sātyaki. They attacked Sātyaki with the very pots from which they were eating. Pradyumna rushed to Sātyaki's rescue. Impelled by time, both of them (Sātyaki and Pradyumna) were killed at the very sight of Krishṇa. Terribly aggrieved at this happening, Krishṇa took up a handful of *Eraka* grass that grew there. The grass turned into a terrible iron-bolt with which he killed all that he came upon. The Andhakas and the Bhojas, the Saineyas and Vrishṇis, all were engaged in fighting each other. Whoever took up *Eraka* grass, it turned into an iron-bolt with which the Yādavas caused their self destruction. "The Kukuras and the Andhakas met with their destruction like insects rushing at a blazing fire. As they were thus being slaughtered, no one among them thought of escaping from fight. Knowing that the hour of destruction had come, the mighty-armed Keśava stood there, eyeing everything. Indeed, the slayer of Madhu, stood, raising a bolt of iron formed of a blade of grass. Beholding that Sāmba was slain, as also Chārudeshṇa, and Pradyumna and Aniruddha, Mādhava became filled with rage. Beholding Gada lying dead on the ground, his wrath became enhanced. Then Krishṇa, exterminated the Vrishṇis and Andhakas" (fig. 269). Vabhru and Dāruka said, "O holy one, a very large number of men has been slain. Turn now to where Rāma (Balarāma) has gone. We wish to go there where he has proceeded" (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Maushala Parva*).

Dāruka, Krishṇa and Vabhru went out in search of Balarāma and they beheld him leaning against a tree in a lonely spot. Advised by Krishṇa, Dāruka left for Hastināpura to inform the Pāṇḍavas of the great slaughter of the Yādavas. Thereafter Krishṇa asked Vabhru to proceed to Dvārakā to protect the Yādava ladies. On the way Vabhru was pierced by someone with an iron bolt and he died. Seeing Vabhru slain, Krishṇa told Rāma to wait for him till he came after arranging for the safety of the ladies of Dvārakā. Reaching Dvārakā, Krishṇa told his father to protect the ladies till Arjuna came. He touched the feet of his father, took leave of him and came back to the spot where Rāma, who was an incarnation of Nāga Śesha, set himself to *yoga* (meditation). A huge snake came out of his mouth and proceeded to the sea. He was received by the ocean himself and many other celestial snakes. Thus came to an end the human life of Balarāma (fig. 270).

After Balarāma left the human world, Krishṇa wandered for some times in the forest and then restraining all his senses, speech and mind, laid himself down in high *yoga*. At that time a hunter, Jarā by name, came there and mistaking Keśava for a dear, pierced his heel with a shaft. But, alas, to his sorrow he found Krishṇa dressed in a yellow robe, rapt in meditation (figs. 271 and 272). Krishṇa comforted him and ascended heaven, filling the sky with splendour and went to his own inconceivable region.

Meanwhile Dāruka reached Hastināpura and informed the Pāṇḍavas of the destruction of the Yādavas and conveyed to them Krishṇa's message. Arjuna, accompanied by Dāruka, came to Dvārakā, now bereft of all beauty. Arjuna comforted the wives of Krishṇa, who were wailing loudly at the great calamity that had befallen them. Thereafter Arjuna met Krishṇa's father, Vasudeva who broke down in sorrow. Wailing, he said to Arjuna, "How is it that the lord of the universe, viz. the slayer of Madhu (i.e. Krishṇa), who had put forth his prowess for achieving the destruction of Keśin and Kamsa, and Chaidya swelling with pride, and Ekalavya, the son the ruler of the Nishādas, and the Kaliṅgas, and the Magadhans and the Gāndhāras and the king of Kāśī and many other rulers, assembled together in the midst of the desert and many heroes belonging to the East and the South and many kings of the mountanious regions also, how could he remain indifferent to such a calamity as the curse pronounced by the Rishis ? Thyself, Nārada and the *munis* knew him to be the eternal and sinless Govinda, the Deity of unfading glory. Alas, being puissant Vishṇu himself, he witnessed without interfering, the destruction of his

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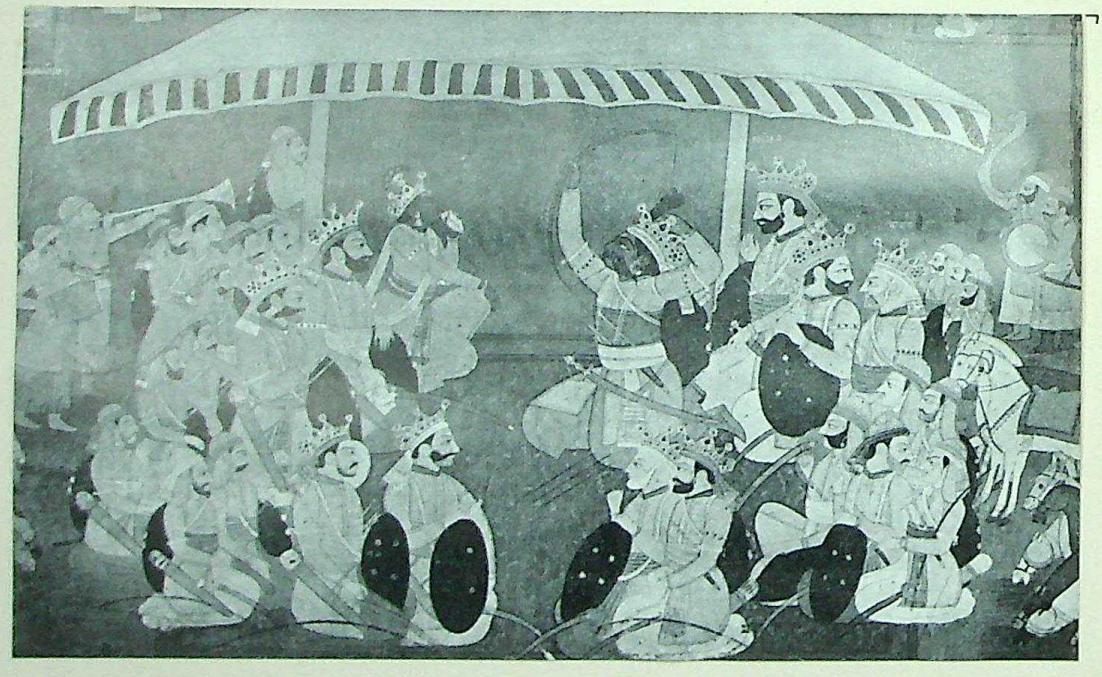
kinsmen. He was the lord of the universe. He did not, however, wish to falsify the words of Gāndhārī and the Rishis."

Arjuna comforted Vasudeva with suitable words. The next day Vasudeva died. His wives, Devakī, Bhadrā, and Rohiṇī ascended the funeral pyre of their husband. Arjuna performed the last rites of Vasudeva and other Yādava heroes who were slaughtered. Thereafter Arjuna searched out the dead bodies of Rāma and Keśava and duly performed the funeral rites for them.

On the seventh day Arjuna left for Hastināpura in his chariot along with the ladies and children of Dvārakā. Other citizens of Dvārakā followed Arjuna. When Arjuna left Dvārakā, it was engulfed by the ocean. As Arjuna proceeded, he crossed many lands and forests. When he came to Pañchanada, a band of robbers attacked the procession of the Vrishṇis. Arjuna tried to use his mighty *Gāṇdiva* to protect them, but failed. In his very sight the robbers dragged away most of the laides. Arjuna who was mainly responsible for the victory in the Kurukshetra battle now understood that he had not the power which he had before. He felt that all this was the work of destiny. Bringing with him the remnants of the Vrishṇis, he established them at different places. The son of Sātyakı was established on the bank of the Sarasvatī. Indraprastha was given to Vajra, son of Aniruddha and grandson of Krishṇa. Rukmiṇī, the princess of Gandhāra, Śaivyā, Haimavatī and Jāmbavatī ascended the funeral pyre. Satyabhāmā and other dear wives of Krishṇa went to forest to practise penance. They took up their abode in a place called Kalpa beyond Himavat. (P. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, *Maushala Parva*).



Pāṇḍavas with Krishṇa and their allies at the commencement of the Bhārata battle, Kangra style, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

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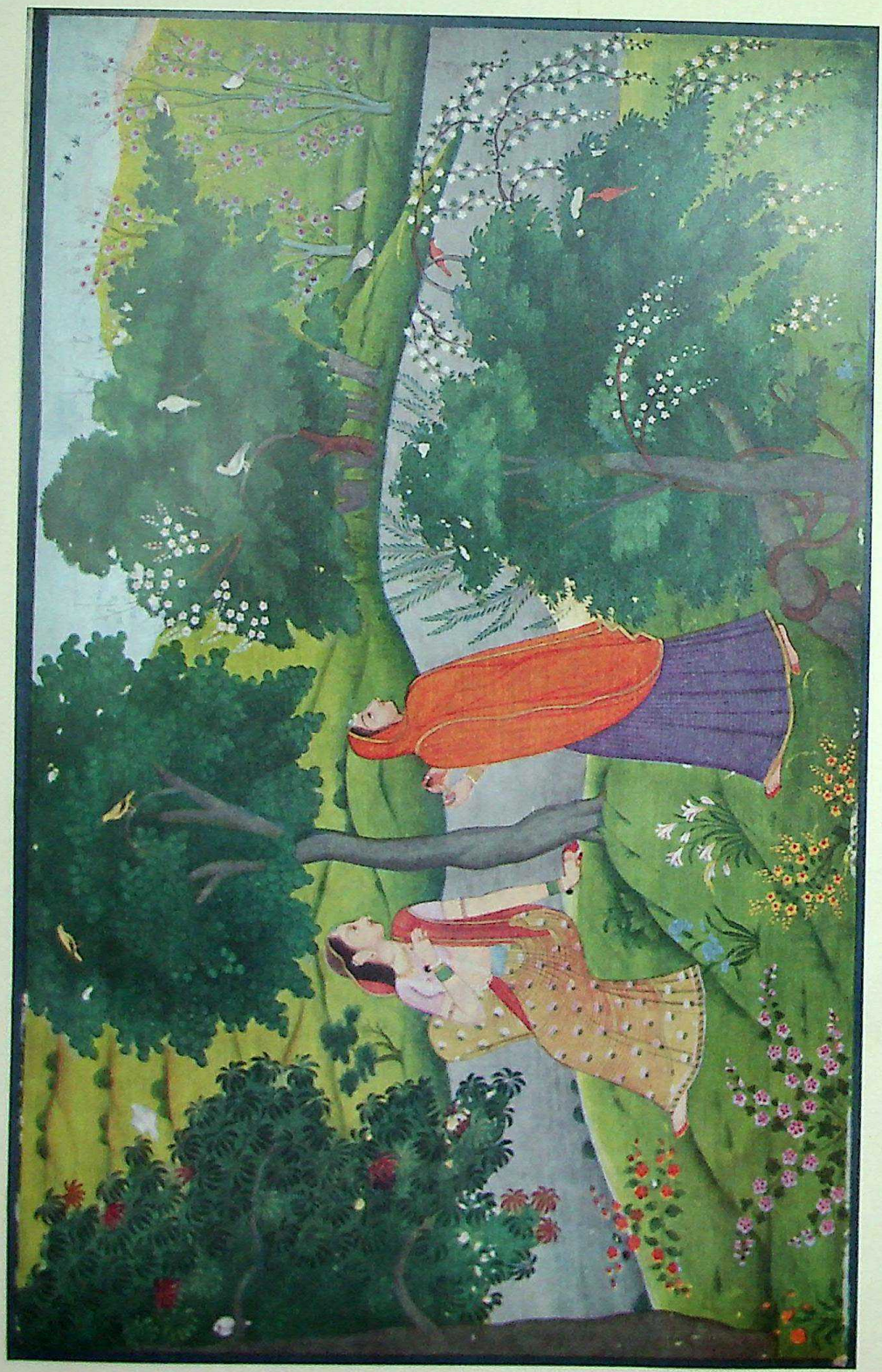

Rādhā and her Sakhī awaiting Krishṇa, Guler Style, 1760—1765, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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UTTAR PRADESH

ACCORDING to the *Purāṇas* and other available sources, Krishṇa was born in Mathura. As mentioned above, opinions differ as to the exact time when he flourished, but the general consensus of opinion is that he lived about 1500 years before Christ, and the span of his life was about 100 years. When Krishṇa was born, Kamsa, who belonged to the Andhaka family was the ruler of the Śūrasena or Mathura Janapada. Kamsa was a tyrant; he deposed his old father, Ugrasena and occupied the throne. His greatest ally was his father-in-law, Jarāsandha, the powerful monarch of Magadha. It was the time when there was an acute struggle between monarchy and democracy. The Magadhan confederacy was extending its power under the leadership of Jarāsandha and he had his allies in Kamsa of Mathura, Śiśupāla of Chedī, Duryodhana of the Kuru family, Rukmī of Vidarbha and Kāla Yavana of Western India and several others who helped Jarāsandha in his expeditions on Mathura forcing Krishṇa and his kinsmen to leave Mathura and settle in Dvārakā in the far-off west.

Krishṇa played an important role in the history of this period. He not only fought against the tyrant kings, actuated by the policy of self-aggrandisement, but also helped the nation with a broad social outlook and philosophy.

Krishṇa's life in Gokula and Vrindavana was one as it were of disguise; with the killing of Kamsa he came to public light. He along with Balarāma went to the *āśrama* of Sāndīpani at Ujjayinī for education, when he was about twelve years of age. According to the *Harivaṁśa* he was a youngman at this time.

The death of Kamsa enraged Jarāsandha and he led an expedition to Mathura to keep it under his control and punish those who killed his son-in-law, Kamsa. Political reasons perhaps weighed more with him than his relationship with Kamsa.

When Jarāsandha attacked Mathura second time, the Yādava army under the leadership of Krishṇa and Balarāma adopted guerilla tactics and harassed the army of Jarāsandha. For some reason or other, the Karusha king Damaghosha and a part of Chedi army alienated themselves from Jarāsandha's army and joined the side of Krishṇa.

According to the *Purāṇas*, Jarāsandha attacked Mathura eighten times. In his last expedition he sought the help of a powerful foreign king, Kāla Yavana. When Krishṇa came to know that there would be a two-pronged attack on Mathura, he sent the Yādavas to Dvārakā, (which was an important centre of the Yādavas). The Yādavas most reluctantly left for Dvārakā leaving Krishṇa and Balarāma in Mathura to meet the challenge of Jarāsandha.

Dvārakā was an ancient town. The city was reconstructed, repairs to old houses were made and new houses were built to accommodate the new population (*jīrṇoddhāra*, *Harivaṁśa*, Ch. 113).

The history of Vaishṇavism in Mathura and other parts of Uttar Pradesh as in the rest of India is obscure for several centuries. The veil is lifted in the 4th-3rd century B.C. with the account of Megasthenes about Mathura.

Regarding the history of Bhāgavatism in Uttar Pradesh its earliest extant objective evidence is the Balarāma image of Mathura, now preserved in the State Museum, Lucknow. It is a two-armed standing figure with a canopy of serpent-hoods above the head and snake coils carved on the back and sides of the body. The figure has as usual a club (*musala*) in his right hand and a plough in the left, and stylistically it belongs to the 2nd century B.C. Again, it is interesting to note that Śrī-Lakshmī, a popular Vaishṇavite deity, occurs on the coins of most of the Mathura rulers (3rd-2nd century B.C.), such as Gomitra, Brahmamitra, Dṛiḍhamitra, Sūryamitra, Vishṇumitra, Purushadatta, Uttamadatta, Balabhūti, Rāmadatta and several others (Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, London, 1936, pp. 169 ff).

The figure of Vishṇu occurs also on a coin of Vishṇumitra of Pañchāla (2nd century B.C.). Again, some of the early coins of Kausambi (3rd century B.C.) contain the

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representation of Lakshmī being anointed by two elephants. This device occurs also on the coins of Śivadatta of Ayodhyā (1st century B.C.) (Allan, *op. cit.*, pp. 129 ff). There is a unique Vrishṇi coin in the the British Museum, London, which contains a *dharmachakra* on its reverse. This device has been interpreted by some scholars as the Sudarśana chakra of Krishṇa (K. K. Dasgupta, *Tribal History of Ancient India, A Numismatic Approach*, pp. 189 ff). Again, one of the coins from Almora bears the name Haridatasa in Brāhmī script (2nd-1st century B.C.) indicating that the ruler in question was inclined towards Vaishṇavism (as Hari is a very popular appellation of Vishṇu (Allan, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 ff). All this would show that Vaishṇavism was wide spread in different parts of Uttar Pradesh as early as the 3rd-1st century B.C.

As to the popularity of the Krishṇa cult in Mathura during the Indo-Scythic period, the Mora Well inscription and the New Mathura inscription of the time of Soḍāsa (1st century B.C.), son of Rājuvula, throw considerable light. The Mora Well inscription of the time of Mahākshatrapa Soḍāsa (1st century B.C.) refers to the enshrinement of the images of five heroes (Pañchavīras) of the Vrishṇis in a stone temple by a lady called Toshā (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 194 ff). On the authority of the Jaina texts, the *Antagaḍadasāo* and the *Harivaṁśa*, Vogel identified them with Balarāma, Akrūra, Anādhrishṭi, Sāraṇa and Vidūratha. J. N. Banerjea shows, however, more convincingly that the Vrishṇi heroes as known to the *Purāṇas* are Saṅkarshaṇa, Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, Sāmba and Aniruddha, four of whom excepting Sāmba, constitute the four *Vyūhas* of the Pāñcharātra cult (*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. X, pp. 65 ff). The opening verses of the Chapter, 79 of The *Vāyu Purāṇa* read as follows:-

Manushyaprakritīn devān
Kīrtyamānān nibodhata
Saṅkarshaṇo-Vāsudeva
Pradyumnaḥ Sāmba eva cha

The New Mathura inscription records the creation by one Vasu of a quadrangle enclosed by four buildings, gateway and a square terrace at the shrine of Bhagavat Vāsudeva, during the reign of Mahākshatrapa Śoḍāsa (R. P. Chanda, *Memoirs*, Archaeological Survey of India, No. 5, p. 170). The epigraph reads as follows:-

Vasunā Bhagava [to Vāsude]
vasya mahāsthāna [chatuḥśā]
lam toraṇam ve [dikāprati]
shṭhāpito prīto bha [vatu Vāsu]
deva svāmisya [Mahākshatra]
pasya Soḍāsasya
samvarteyatām.

From the above, it appears that Soḍāsa was a patron, if not a follower, of Bhāgavatism.

Mathura continued to be a stronghold of Vaishṇavism or Krishṇa-Vāsudeva cult during the Kushāṇa period. This cult obviously exercised a great influence on the minds of the rulers as is evident from the fact that one of the Kushāṇa kings was named Vāsudeva.

The earliest representation in India of Krishṇa belongs to this period and comes from Mathura. It is the Mathura Museum relief, No. 1344, which represents Vasudeva carrying his newborn child, Krishṇa to Gokula across the Yamunā. The river is shown by means of waves with acquatic animals, such as fish, tortoise, and alligators, etc. Apart from this, there is a Kushāṇa pillar from Mathura showing Krishṇa subduing Kāliya. Again, mention may be made here of a few other Bhāgavata or Vaishṇavite antiquities (of this period), belonging to the Mathura Museum. They are the figure of Vishṇu, with one hand in *abhayamudrā* and the other having an *amrita-ghaṭa*, the two additional hands, holding a *mace* and *chakra*; another four-armed Vishṇu with a typical drapery of the Kushāṇa period, an eight-armed Vishṇu figure probably in Virāṭa-form and a Brahmanical relief containing among other neo-Brahmanic deities a four-armed Vishṇu.

It is interesting to note that the Karachi Museum (Pakistan) contains two Bhāgavata panels, from Mathura, of the Kushāṇa period. One of them shows Krishṇa's fight with the bull-demon. The exploits of Krishṇa seem to have found the earliest representation in Mathura.

One Mathura relief of this period shows a two-armed female deity between Krishṇa and Balarāma. Her right hand is raised up while the left hand is placed on the hip. Balarāma, also two-armed, holds a plough in his right hand. There is no snake-hood over his head. Krishṇa is shown with four arms. In his upper left and right hands he holds a wheel and a mace. The lower left hand akimbo is with a lotus flower whereas the lower right is in *abhaya* pose. This is perhaps the representation of the Ekānamśā triad. Again it is interesting to note that there is a Kushāṇa panel in the Mathura Museum, showing Krishṇa and Balarāma as attending Neminātha. This reflects the Jaina aspect of Krishṇa-story in which he occupies a role secondary to Neminātha.

To the Kushāṇa period (2nd-3rd century) may be ascribed also a stone fragment (some equipment for the exercise of weight lifting) showing a caparisoned horse fighting with a man. This may well represent Krishṇa's fight with Keśī (who came in the guise of a horse). Krishṇa withstood the onslaught of

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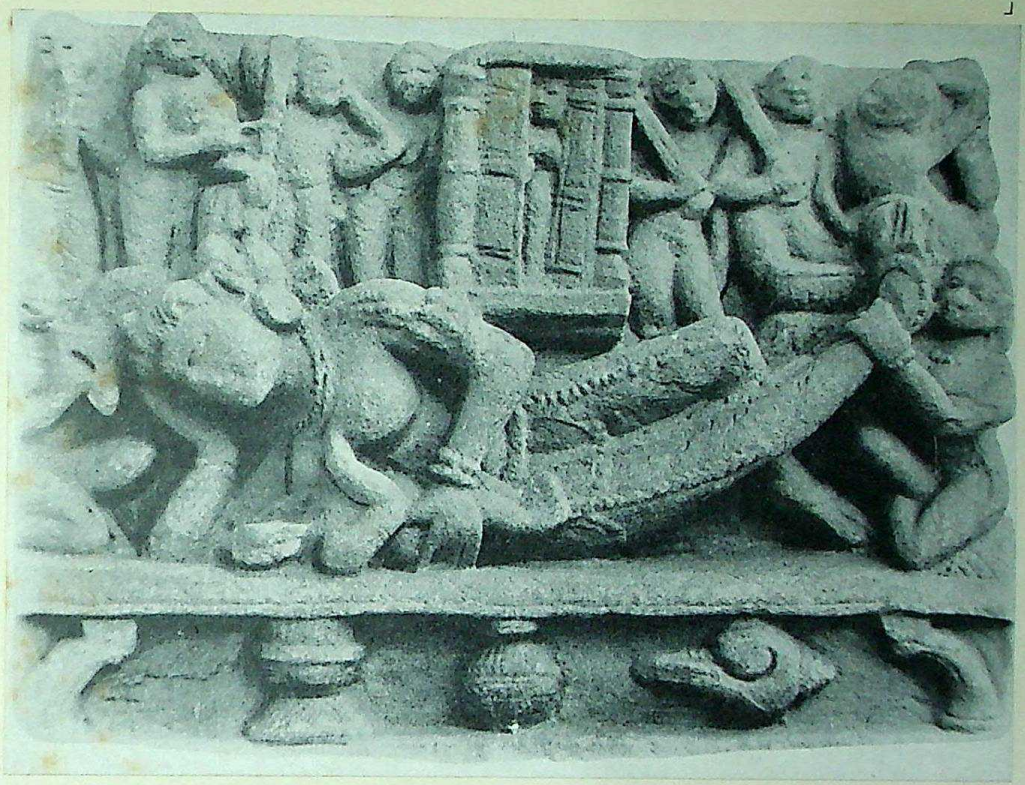

Birth of Krishṇa, stone, c. 11th century, U.P., Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, University of Calcutta, Calcutta.

the demon and killed him as stated above. (N. P. Joshi, *Mathura Sculptures*, Mathura) This fragment which is now in the Mathura Museum was found at the Bharatpur gate, Mathura.

It may be mentioned here that the excavations at Ahichchhatrā yielded some terracotta figurines indicating the influence of Vāsudeva-Vishṇu cult here during c. A.D. 300 (V. S. Agrawala, "The terracottas of Ahichchhatrā", *Ancient India*, No. 4).

Bhita (an ancient site near Allahabad) provides a number of seals supplying evidence of the prevalence of Vaishṇavism during the early centuries of the Christian era. As is well known, the conch and wheel, two important Vaishṇava symbols occur on a number of Bhita seals discovered in the course of excavations there in 1911-12; one of the seals containing a symbol, like the wheel, bears in the northern script of the 3rd-4th century the legend: *namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*. It is clear that the author of this seal was an ardent follower of Krishṇa-Vāsudeva. (*Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1911-12, pp.50 ff). It is quite possible that there was a Vāsudeva temple here.

Under the patronage of the Guptas who were *paramabhāgavatas* (staunch followers of the Bhāgavata cult) Vaishṇavism gained popularity in Uttar Pradesh as in other parts of northern India. Kālidāsa knew the glory of the Vraja-maṇḍala. He has described Mathura, Vrindavana, Govardhana and the Yamunā in the *Raghuvaṁśa* (Canto VI, vv 45-51). Susheṇa, the king of Śūrasena Janapada, who came to Indumatī's *Svayaṁvara* has been described by Kālidāsa as a powerful king, who wore a jewel brighter than the one which adorned the chest of Krishṇa. He has compared Vrindavana with the Chaitratha of Kuvera.

> Sambhāvya bhartāramamum yuvānam mriduprabalottara pushpa-śayye.
>
> Vrindāvane Chaitrarathādanūne nirvishyatām sundari yauvanaśrīḥ, *Raghu*, VI, 50.

A terracotta figure of a four-armed Vishṇu (upper portion of which is lost) with a short loin cloth, *vanamālā*, and two side emblems, *chakra* and *gadā*, ascribable to the Gupta period was found in Rajghat near the Kāśī Railway Station in 1940, indicating the popularity or the Vishṇu worship among the masses

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during the 4th century.

The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta describes this powerful monarch as Garutmadāṅka. That shows that he had adopted Garuḍa standard as his insignia from which it is clear that he was a devotee of Vishṇu. Further, the expression: 'sādnvasādhūdaya-pralaya-hetu purushashyā-chintasya' in the said inscription meaning that Samudragupta was the person, who used to promote the honest and destroy the dishonest reminds us of the verse of the *Gītā: paritrāṇāya sādhūnām vināśāya cha duskhritām dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge*. Further, the word *achintya* is very significant. By using this word, the poet described the king as one who was beyond comprehension as Vishṇu. The Nalanda and Gaya plates of Samudragupta, which are considered to be spurious by some scholars on palaeographic grounds, describe Samudragupta as a *paramabhāgavata*.

His son Chandragupta II was a devotee of Krishṇa-Vishṇu as he is called *paramabhāgavata* on the coins. It is quite possible, he is the same as Chandra of the Mehrauli pillar inscription, who is credited in the said inscription with the erection of the *Vishṇudhvaja* (pillar in honour of Vishṇu) on the Vishṇu-pada hill (Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, p. 141). Some scholars believe that he caused to be constructed also a beautiful Vaishṇava temple in Mathura, near the birth place of Krishṇa (Katra-Kesava), but no traces of this temple remain now.

That Skandagupta had special predilections towards Vaishṇavism is apparent from his Bhitari pillar inscription (Bhitari is a village in the Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh). The inscription says that he installed an image of Śārṅgin (Krishṇa) in the place to increase the religious merit of his father Kumāragupta (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 56). Further, the inscription alludes to Krishṇa's exploits that he approached the mother Devakī in the prison after killing Kamsa. The recent excavations at Bhitari by Dr. K. K. Sinha, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, have yielded a stone relief which some scholars propose to identify as Vasudeva carrying the new-born Krishṇa to Gokula.

The Gadhwa stone inscription, Gupta year 148 = A.D. 467-68 (Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 267 and 68) records the installation of an image of Vishṇu under the name of Anantasvāmī; and mentions the purpose of providing perfumes, incense, garlands, etc., and of executing repairs, and a grant, the details of which are lost, but which would seem to consist of some land at a village belonging to the same god under the name of Chitrakūṭasvāmin, or the lord of Chitrakūṭa.'

That Vaishṇavism and Krishṇa worship flourished in Uttar Pradesh very widely is indicated by the discovery of many seals depicting Vaishṇavite symbols, found in Jhusi, and Kausambi near Allahabad apart from those, from Bhita, already mentioned. One of the Gupta seals from Jhusi contains the legend: Satyasvāmī which seems to be an equivalent of Satya-Nārāyaṇa. Again several seals from Jhusi of this period bear the legend: *Padmanābha* or *Padmanābhasvāmin* (K. K. Thaplyal, *Studies in Ancient Indian seals*, Lucknow, 1972, pp. 158 and 159). Padmanābha is a well-known epithet of Vishṇu. Again, a fragmentary seal from Jhusi, preserved in the Allahabad Museum, contains the name Lokanātha which is an appellation of Vishṇu in the *Vishṇu-Sahasranāma* (B. Ch. Chhabra, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1954, p. 123). The name of Vishṇu as Lokanātha occurs also on an inscription from Bengal (see the chapter on Vaishṇavism in Bengal). Mention may be made here of a sealing from Ahichchhatrā, with the legend Mādhava and of the two from Rajghat, one containing the legend, Govindasvāmī (Lord Govinda) and the other mentioning Vaṭasvāmī. It is interesting to note that a temple dedicated to Govindasvāmī is a mentioned in an inscription (5th century) from Bogra District, Bengal. Vaṭasvāmī refers to Krishṇa as Vaṭapatraśāyī, i.e. the deity lying down on a banyan leaf on the waters (K. K. Thaplyal, *op. cit.*, p. 160).

Now we may refer to some of the important Krishṇa and Vishṇu sculptures, belonging to the Gupta period, found in different parts of Uttar Pradesh. The stone sculptures showing Krishṇa lifting the mount Govardhana, housed in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi and Mathura Museum, Mathura are well known. Krishṇa lifts the mountain with his left hand, while his right hand rests on the thigh. He has a large *vanamālā* and various ornaments. He is shown endowed with *Kākapaksha* indicating his youthful age.

The Mathura Museum houses a broken relief showing Krishṇa vanquishing Kāliya. The five-hooded Kāliya caught the boy Krishṇa in his clutches. In the sculpture Krishṇa is shown as tying the serpent with a rope. The female figure below Kāliya is probably his consort, praying for the release of her husband.

The Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, houses also a Gupta panel, depicting Yaśodā and Gopīs churning curd, while the child Krishṇa is eating butter from the pot.

The State Museum, Lucknow, has a terracotta depicting Balarāma killing Pralamba (c. A.D. 500). The treatment shows a vigorous action. A stone relief from the same Museum shows Bhīma's fight with Jarāsandha. This famous lintel piece from

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Rādhā and Krishna looking into a mirror, Garhwal, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Garhawa shows four-armed Krishṇa witnessing wrestling between Bhīma and Jarāsandha (c. A.D. 600). The same Museum has also a terracotta from Śrāvastī, in which the scene of Keśī-vadha has been depicted (c. sixth century).

In the Allahabad Museum are housed a few early images of Vishṇu. Mention may be made here of Vishṇu from Bhita, late fourth century. The god stands facing to the front carrying a *bījapūraka*, mace (*gadā*), a large discus (*chakra*), and a conch (*śaṇkha*), in his four hands. The soft modelling, squat proportions, and the iconographic features, such as the round mace, and the large discus and the conch are features reminiscent of the late Kushāṇa period (Promod Chandra, *Stone Sculpture in the Allahabad Museum*, fig. 120, p. 72). The standing Vishṇu image from Jhusi, Allahabad district, 5th century, is also a fine example of early period (Promod Chandra, *op. cit.*, fig. 186, p. 88). The image has a small halo, and a short cylindrical crown adorned with festoons. Equally interesting is the Gupta Vishṇu image from Unchdih near Allahabad, (*Ibid.* fig. 223).

One of the main centres of Krishṇa-Vishṇu cult during the Gupta period was Deogarh. The niches of the Daśāvatāra temple of Deogarh contain some Vaishṇava sculptures of superb beauty, such as Gajendra-moksha, Nara-Nārāyaṇa and Anantaśāyī-Vishṇu. The panels on the plinth are of greater interest to us as they show several Krishṇa-līlā scenes apart from the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes. The important Krishṇa scenes may be enumerated as follows: (i) the birth of Krishṇa, (ii) Nanda and Yaśodā fondling Krishṇa, (iii) Nanda fondling Krishṇa, (iv) Krishṇa upturning the cart (śakaṭa-bhaṅga), (v) Krishṇa receiving his friend, Sudāmā, and a few others, (M. S. Vats, *Gupta Temple at Deogarh*, Memoirs, No. 70, Archaeological Survey of India).

The first panel depicting the birth of Krishṇa, as mentioned above shows Devakī handing over the new-born Krishṇa to Vasudeva, who as the story goes carried the child to Gokula, placed it by the side of Yaśodā and carried away her new-born daughter to Mathura and informed the guards that a daughter was born to him through Devakī and not a male child as it was predicted by a divine voice before. The second panel shows two figures, one a male and the other a female, each holding a baby in his own hands. They wear the distinctive dress respectively of a gopa and a gopī, helping to identify them as Nanda and Yaśodā. The third panel shows a bust (broken) of a male figure probably Nanda fondling the child Krishṇa in both hands. In the style of hair and details of ornamentation, the figure is similar to that of Nanda referred to earlier.

The fourth panel, housed now in the National Museum, depicts the child Krishṇa lying on a small cushioned cot, kicking with his left leg, a rectangular box-like cart with jars (presumably containing milk, curd and butter). Krishṇa holds a peacock or crow in his right hand. To his left stands a lady with a look of wonder and fear and she in all probability is Yaśodā. Another panel shows Krishṇa in the centre; Sudāmā, his Brāhmaṇa classmate stands to his left and Rukmiṇī to his right. She is amazed at the courtesy shown by Krishṇa to this poor Brāhmaṇa.

Besides the above, there are a few other scenes from Krishṇa's life, including one depicting Kamsa-vadha and the other Śiśupāla-vadha (?). Recently a sculpture has come to light from Deogarh, showing Krishṇa upholding the mountain Govardhana. This is a beautiful sculpture depicting Krishṇa with *Kākapaksha* showing his youthful age(fig.112).

The temple of Bhitargaon, about 20 miles south of Kanpur, was in all probability dedicated to Vishṇu. It is the oldest extant brick temple showing fine architecture of the Gupta period. Apart from other figures noticed, in the centre of the back wall is the representation of Boar incarnation. Further, one of the upper niches of the temple contains the representation of Vishṇu reclining on the serpent Śesha. All this would tend to show the Vaishṇava association of the place and the temple.

That Vaishṇavism continued to enjoy the patronage of the people and royal families is indicated by other facts also. The Sarnath inscription of king Prakaṭāditya which can be ascribed palaeographically to the 7th century shows that the king was devoted to Krishṇa-Vāsudeva cult as is evident from the expression: *bhakti-dharmaika śakti-satata-prathita*. The object of the inscription is to mention the erection of a temple in honour of Vishṇu as Muradvisha. This would show that Sarnath region during the Gupta period witnessed the development of Vaishṇavism side by side with that of Buddhism. It is worth mentioning here that the beautiful stone sculpture showing the Govardhana-līlā, housed in the Bharat Kala Bhavan comes from Sarnath. As indicated above, this theme seems to have been popular in Uttar Pradesh during the Gupta period and also subsequently. Belonging to the early medieval period is a grey sandstone relief depicting Krishṇa's Govardhana-līlā, which was found at Jatipur near the village Govardhana in Mathura district and now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

The Krishṇa stories were alluded to also in Bāṇa's *Harshacharita*. Bāṇa describes the birth of Harsha saying that he came into the womb of Yaśomatī as Krishṇa in Devakī

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(*Harshacharita*, 4th *Adhyāya;* Baijnath Sharma, *Harsha and his Times*, p. 4).

One of the inscriptions from Pabhosa, ascribable to the 8th century throws welcome light on the Krishṇa worship in Uttar Pradesh. It reads: *Śrī-Krishṇa-Gopīrūpa-kartā*, which means that some one built the statues of Krishṇa and milk-maids (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, p. 482).

The Pehoa inscription from the temple of Garibnath (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. 1, pp. 184-190), dated Harsha era, 276 (A.D. 882-83) records that certain pious horse dealers who met at the horse-fair at Pehoa (Prithūdaka, Karnal district) imposed upon themselves and their customers certain taxes the proceeds of which were to be distributed among some temples, priests and sanctuaries. Among the beneficiaries was the Vishṇu temple built by Brāhmaṇa Bhūvaka in Bhojpur near Kanauj. At Kanauj have also been found certain panels showing Bakāsura-vadha, Viśva-rūpa Vishṇu and Śakaṭa-bhaṅga, etc. (c. 9th century). Ascribable to the same period is a fragment of doorway from Bara (Allahabad district), one of the niches of which shows the scene of the killing of Vatsāsura by Krishṇa. This fragment is in the Allahabad Museum (Pramod Chandra, *op. cit.*, p. 105).

A Pāṇḍukeśavr inscription ascribable to 854 records that king Lalitaśūradeva, for the religious merit of his parents, made a grant in favour of the god Nārāyaṇa installed by Bhaṭṭa Śrīpurusha in a village called Garuḍāgrāma. The king was eclectic in spirit inasmuch as he, Śaivite by personal faith, made a grant in favour of Nārāyaṇa or Vishṇu. This temple was somewhere near the Badarikāśrama as it is said in the inscription that the temple should get some help from the Brahmachārīs attached to a Tapovana near Badarikāśrama (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 277 ff).

A Siyadoni inscription from Siyadoni, Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh, speaks of certain donations made at different times by different people. The second part of the inscription (c. 10th century) records the erection of a Murāri temple (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, pp. 162 ff) and refers to the donations made to this and other temples at Siyadoni by artisans and traders. Donations were made to Vishṇu under the names of Vishṇu-bhaṭṭāraka, Nārāyaṇa-bhaṭṭāraka, Vāmana-svāmideva and Chakrasvāmideva. The Murāri temple mentioned in the inscription has been identified by some scholars with a ruined shrine in the neighbouring village of Satgotta, where many Vishṇu images have been found of which some have been transferred to the Lucknow Museum.

The cult of Vaikuṇṭha Vishṇu was popular in the Garhwal and Kumaon region about the 10th century as it was in Kashmir. About the popularity of the cult, the Khajuraho inscription of Yaśovarmadeva of V.S. 1011 (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 134, verse 43) says: 'The Lord of Bhoṭa obtained the image (Vaikuṇṭha) from Kailāsa and from him, Sāhī, the king of Kira, received it as a token of friendship, from him afterwards Herambapāla obtained it for force of elephants and horses, and Yaśovarman, the Chandella king, received it from Devapāla, the lord of horses, the son of Herambapāla'. Dr. K. P. Nautial in his book, *The Archaeology of Kumaon*, Varanasi, 1969, p. 284, says that this statement indicates the popularity of the Vaikuṇṭha cult in Mānasarovara, Kailāsa and probably Badarīnātha and Kedāranātha areas.

Though Kumaon was an important centre of Śaivism (the Katyuri rulers of Kumaon helped Śaṅkara in establishing a Śaiva Maṭha in this region), Vaishṇavism was not unknown or absent as is clear from certain Vaishṇava shrines and sculptures lying scattered here and there: The Yogabadarī temple and Vāsudeva temple (both ascribable to c. 9th century, Nautial, *op. cit.*, p. 92) contain bronze images of Vishṇu with the names of Yogabadarī and Vāsudeva carved respectively on them.

Alberuni (c. 1030) while describing the history of India has referred to Śūrasena and Mathura. His account contains many exploits also of Krishṇa. Alberuni notes that Vāsudeva had a special name in each month beginning with Mārgasīrsha as follows:-

> Mārgaśīrsha: Keśava; Pausha: Nārāyaṇa; Māgha: Mādhava; Phālguna: Govinda; Chaitra: Vishṇu; Vaiśākha: Madhusūdana; Jyaishṭha: Trivikrama; Āshāḍha: Vāmana; Śrāvaṇa: Śrīdhara; Bhādrapada: Hrishīkeśa; Aśvayuja: Padmanābha; Kārttika: Dāmodara (E. C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, 1910, Vol. I. p. 403).

The Vaṭeśvar stone Inscription of Paramardideva of the Vikrama year 1252 (the stone which bears the inscription was found in an ancient mound of Vaṣṭeśvar in the Agra district, on the right bank of the Yamunā) begins with an invocation to Vāsudeva, and verses 25-29 tell us that Sallakshaṇa, Minister of Paramardideva built a temple of Vishṇu and a temple of Śiva at which the inscription was put up (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. 1, pp. 207 ff).

Mention may be made here of some stone obelisks, probably from Bulandshahar, now preserved in the State Museum, Lucknow, which contain various scenes from Krishṇa's life. These reliefs belong to c. 12th century.

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The Gāhaḍavālas (1112-1194) were devotees of Vāsudeva. Their inscriptions normally open with invocations to Vishṇu and Lakshmī. Govindachandra was a tolerant king; he and his wife Kumāra Devī made gifts also to the Bauddha Bhikshus. Kumāra Devī is credited with the erection of a Buddhist monastery at Sarnath.

Govindachandra's son was Vijayachandra (1155-1170). Vijayachandra constructed many Vishṇu temples in his kingdom. It is mentioned in an inscription dated Samvat 1207 (1150) that Vijayachandra got constructed a beautiful Vishṇu temple at Katra-Keśava, the birth place of Krishṇa (K. D. Bajpai, *Braja Kā Itihāsa*, part I, p. 134). This temple is said to have been destroyed during the rule of Sikandar Lodi (1488-1517) who was a religious bigot and was responsible for destruction of many Hindu temples and images. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is said to have come to Mathura at about 1515. and worshipped the image at Katra-Keśava. Thus it appears that this image was destroyed after Chaitanya's visit (K. D. Bajpai, *op. cit.*, pp. 140 ff).

Regarding the popularity of Vaishṇavism in the Gahrwal-Kumaon region, mention may also be made of the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa shrine at Baijnath, dated Śaka year 1214 (A.D. 1292). Further, the Krishṇaite scenes, such as Krishṇa subduing Nāga Kāliya, and Krishṇa playing on flute occur in the Ratnesvar and Champāvat shrines (Nautial, *op. cit.*, pp. 110 and 111). Various forms of Vishṇu, such as Śeshaśāyī, Trivikrama, Nrisimha, etc. have also been found in various places in Kumaon region (Nautial, *op. cit.*, pp. 149 ff).

Again at Champāvat, a village, fifty-four miles south-east of Almora, the Bilveśvara temple contains representation of Krishṇa subduing Naga Kāliya (14th-15th century). A Kāliyamardana scene of the late medieval period has been discovered at Ek Hathia Naula, about three miles north-west of Champāvat (Nautial, *op. cit.*, p. 115).

At Marai which is a village at the foot of the Kaimur range were discovered some pillars showing scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as the taming of the Nāga Kāliya by Krishṇa, the churning of milk by a Gopī, and the slaying of Arishṭa by Krishṇa. These pillars can be ascribed on stylistic grounds to the late medieval period.

There is not much of historical or literary information to throw light on the condition of Vaishṇavism in Uttar Pradesh during the 13th or 14th century. This may be due to the lack of patronage of the religion by the contemporary Muhammadan rulers. But there is no reason to believe that the sacred spot of Mathura completely fell into oblivion. Rājaśekhara Sūri, a Jaina poet mentions Mathura in his *Prabandha-Kosha* (c. A.D. 1348): aparā pūrva-Mathurā yadgoshṭhe Krishṇa samutpannaḥ yatra Vrindāvanādīni vanāni (K.D. Bajpai, *Braja Kā Itihāsa*, 1955, Mathura, p. 144). Bihhaṇa, the Kāshmīrī poet, mentions in his *Vikramāṅkacharita*, 18, 87 that he lived for some time in Mathura where he defeated many paṇḍits of Mathura in Śāstric discussion.

Again, Lakshmīdhara in his *Krityakalpataru* (12th century) mentions as many as twenty-five sites as places of pilgrimages in the Mathura region: Arkasthala, Asikuṇḍa, Astamāna; Usharabhañjanaka, Kaṇakakshetra, Karmāvarohaṇa, Kāliya-Hrada, Govardhana, Jāmbīra-Champaka, Tāmpraprabha, Nandīguhā, Prakīrtana, Vinduprabha, Vrindavana, Bhāṇḍīraka, Yamalārjuna-kuṇḍa, Yamunā, Vatsa - prakīḍana, Ballabhaka, Vitānaka, Vīrasthala, Saptasāmudraka, Somakuṇḍa, etc. (B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 84 and 85).

Though the spread of Islam in India and the religious policy of some of the Muhammadan rulers were not favourable for the growth of Hinduism in the 15th-16th century, Hinduism could survive because of the rise of certain great saints, such as Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Chaitanya, Mīrā Bāī, Vallabhāchārya, etc. Mathura came into prominence in the 16th century as the centre of the religious activities of such great Vaishṇava saints as Rūpa, Sanātana, Jīva and other Gosvāmīs and Vallabha and poet saints collectively known as *Ashṭachhāpa Kavis*. A new wave of Bhakti characterised the religious history of Mathura, and this had a great influence on the Vraja literature. In the wake of the religious activities of these saints and poets, Mathura, Vrindavana, Govardhana and Gokula came to life again and became the pilgrimages of great repute.

Akbar was a tolerant king. He removed the religious taxes earlier imposed on the pilgrims to Mathura and Vrindavana. It is said that Akbar came to Mathura and met Jīva Gosvāmī, Haridās and other great saints of Vrindavana. The emperor was impressed with the erudition of the saints and the sanctity of the place created a deep impression on his mind. The Hindu chiefs in Akbar's court received ready permission from the emperor to build temples in Mathura.

During the reign of Akbar, Maharaja Man Sinha Deva constructed the famous Govindadeva temple in 1590, under the direction of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. It is an impressive religious edifice. The Gopīnāth temple was built a little earlier than the Govindadeva temple by Kachchpavaha Rajput Rayasal.

During the reign of Jahangir many temples came into existence in Mathura and

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Vrīndavana. Maharaja Vīrasimha of Orchha, who was a favourite of Jahangir built the famous Keśavarai temple in Mathura with a huge sum of money. The other important temples built in Vrindavana during Jahangir's reign include the Jugal Kishore temple which was constructed in 1627 by Non-karan Chauhan and the Rādhāvallabha temple in 1626 by the Sundardās Kayastha of Delhi.

Many other temples were built in Vrindavana and Mathura during the period and the reader can get a thorough survey of the position in Growse's *Mathura*.

When Aurangazeb came to power, evil days befell Mathura. The well-known Keśavarai temple built by Vīrasimha of Orchha was destroyed by Ramjan Shah in 1670 at the orders of Aurangazeb, and a big mosque built in its place. Vrindavana also met the same fate as Mathura. Many temples were razed to the ground and idols broken into pieces (K. D. Bajpai, *op. cit.*, pp. 153 ff).

The glory of Vrindavana and Mathura from the 16th century onwards is largely associated with the activities of many distinguished Vaishṇava saints and their followers. Vrindavana, as is well known, became the seat of activities of the Vishṇusvāmī, Śrīvaishṇava, Nimbārka-Vaishṇava, Chaitanya and many other sects. The Vishṇusvāmī sect, established by a South Indian Brāhmaṇa, has very little following now, though it was popular here for several centuries. The sectarian mantra of this community is: '*Om Rāmāya Krishṇāya namaḥ.*' Scholars are of the opinion that the followers of Vishṇusvāmī doctrine include Jñānadeva, Nāmadeva, Rajavishṇu-svāmī, Vilvamaṅgala, and Prabhavishṇusvāmī (K. D. Bajpai, *Braja Ka Itihasa*, Part II, p. 33). Nāmadeva is said to have stayed in Vrindavana for a long time.

It is said that the doctrine of Vishṇusvāmī was remodelled in the 16th century by Vallabhāchārya. Some of the sites of Vrindavana are associated with the Vishṇusvāmins (please see: *Śri-Vishṇu-svāmi-charita* by Sri Govinda Das, Vrindavana, Samvat 2010).

The Vishṇusvāmī system, though similar to that of Madhva, acknowledges Rādhā as Krishṇa's favourite Gopī (but Rādhā has no place in the Madhva system).

The main temple of Śrī Sampradāya in Vrindavana is the Raṅganātha temple which was built between the years 1845-1851 by the merchants, Govinda Dās and Radha Krishṇa.

Rāmānuja, the author of *Śribhāshya*, is the greatest exponent of Śrī Sampradāya. The first āchārya of the sect is Nāthamuni, followed by Puṇḍarīkāksha, Rāma Miśra, Yāmunāchārya and Rāmānuja. The Śrī-Vaishṇavas consider Rāmānuja as an incarnation and worship his image in their temples. According to the tenet of the sect 'the lord is a personal being. Brahman is but another name for Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu, the god of the Vaishṇava sect' (J.N. Farquhar, *The Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, p. 243). This sect does not acknowledge Rādhā.

The Nimbārkas have a close association with Vraja-maṇḍala. It is said that Nimbārka himself propounded his philosophy in Mathura (Bajpai, *op. cit.*, Part. II, p. 43). The holy sites associated with the Nimbārkas are the Narada *Tila* and Dhruva *Tila* in Mathura and Rādhākuṇḍa in Vrindavan.

Nimbārkāchārya was perhaps a Telugu Brāhmaṇa, who settled in Vrindavana, and created a sect of his own. It is not known for certain when Nimbārka flourished.

The Nimbārka philosophy is *bhedābheda*, 'dualistic monism'. Rādhā occupies a high position in Nimbārka tenets. She is Krishṇa's eternal consort and is always present at Gokula with her lord. As Krishṇa became incarnate in Vrindavana, so was the case with Rādhā. Krishṇa is the eternal Brahman from whom emanates Rādhā (J. N. Farquhar, *op. cit.*, p. 240).

Vallabhāchārya was born perhaps in 1478. His father was a Telugu Brāhmaṇa. Vallabha was educated in Banaras and he made north India the main centre of his activities. He is the propounder of the *Suddhādvaita* or *Pushṭimārga* philosophy. His tenets became very popular in Vraja, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Saurāshṭra.

According to the tenets of this sect, established by Vallabha, Krishṇa who is the supreme Brahman (reality) and source of all intelligence and joy alone exists. The material world, and the Jivas (souls) and 'the antaryāmin or indwelling God' proceed from him as sparks from fire. The Jīvas possess reality (*sat*) and intelligence (*chit*) as attributes, but not *ānanda*. Released souls, however, can attain Krishṇa's heaven. Vallabha's system is called *Pushṭimārga* (the way of grace), for the Lord can deliver even the greatest sinner. The devotion which one can possess is dependent on God's grace.

Rādhā occupies a unique place in the Vallabha system. She arises from Krishṇa's side. Krishṇa and Rādhā are eternally engaged in divine sports in the celestial Vrindavana with their devotees.

Vallabha and his son Viṭṭhalanātha made Gokula and Vrindavana their main centre of activities and from there their doctrine spread to Jatipur, Kamavana, and other places.

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Chaitanya Mahāprabhu held Vrindavana in very high respect. It was already visited by some of the great exponents of Vaishṇavism, known to him, such as Mādhavendra Purī, Advaitāchārya and Nityānanda. Chaitanya came to Vrindavana about 1515 A.D. and stayed here for some time, as mentioned in certain Vaishṇavite texts.

As it may be mentioned here Chaitanyadeva asked Rūpa and Sanātana, the most eminent of his disciples to restore Vrindavana to its old glories through their researches and religious activities. (The works of Rūpa, Sanātana and other Gosvāmīs of the Gauḍīya Vaishṇavas have been mainly referred to in the section on Bengal Vaishṇavism).

Rūpa mentions in his *Mathurā-Māhātmya* as many as seventy sacred sites associated with the Mathura region on the basis of the *Ādivarāha*, *Padma*, *Brahma-Vaivarta*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Bhavishya*, *Bhāgavata*, *Matsya*, *Vāmana*, *Vāyu*, *Varāha*, *Vishṇu*, *Brihannāradīya*, *Saura*, and *Skanda Purāṇas*, besides *Gautamīyatantra*, *Brihat Gautamīyatantra* and *Vishṇudharmottara*.

Raghunāthadāsa also mentions some of these places in his works (B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 85). The other three Gosvāmīs who are also known for their devotion and erudition are Jīva (nephew of Rūpa and Sanātana), Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Kāyastha Raghunāthadāsa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa. Growse in his *Mathura* notes that these Gosvāmīs erected a shrine of Brindādevī in Vrindavan, but no traces of this temple exist now. It existed somewhere in Sevākuñja.

Another Vaishṇavite celebrity, deserving special mention is Svāmī Haridāsa. According to Śrī Baladeva Upādhyāya, Svamījī in the beginning was a follower of the Nimbārka sect, but later on he established a separate sect called Sakhī sect. He worshipped Rādhā and Krishṇa with great reverence, in the spirit of a Sakhī (female friend or companion). According to his tenet, Vrindavana is the highest abode, and one's duty is to meditate on Rādhā and Krishṇa together. The chief object of all worship is Krishṇa who is the source of all beauty and flavour.

Two of his works, *Raskepada* and *Siddhānta ke pada*, both in Braja-bhāshā are well-known. (K. D. Bajpai, *op. cit.*, pp. 48 ff). The Bihariji Temple in Vrindavana is the main centre of this sect. This temple is held in high esteem in Vrindavana even now (K. D. Bajapai, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 47-50).

The other well-known Vaishṇava sect of Vrindavana and Mathura is the Rādhā-vallabhīs. The founder of this sect is Hita-Harivamśaji, who advocated the worship of Rādhā-Krishṇa as Svāmī Haridāsa also did. Harivamśaji came to Vrindavana in 1534 and he died in 1552 at the age of fifty. He set up in Vrindavan the Rādhā-Vallabha image.

Harivamśaji was a great devotee who remained immersed in the enjoyment of the divine sports of Rādhā and Krishṇa. He was a good poet both in Sanskrit and Braja-bhāshā. His *Rādhā-sudhā-nidhi* and *Yamunā-shṭaka* in Sanskrit describe the beauty of Rādhā and the Yamunā in sweet and elegant language.

His books *Hita-chaurāsī* and *sphuṭa-vāṇī* are considered as ideal works in Braja-bhāshā. Among the other writers of this school, mention may be made of Śrī Harirāma Vyāsa, Śrī Dhruvadāsa, Śrī Nagarīdāsa, Śrī Rūpalāla and Vrindāvanadāsa.

The chief object of worship of this sect is also Krishṇa, the supreme god, who appeared in Vrindavana in the form of Rādhā and Krishṇa. His soul is Rādhā, mind is Krishṇa, the body is Vrindavana and the sense organs are the Sakhīs (female friends or companions) (K. D. Bajpai, *op. cit.*, pp. 50 ff).

Vallabhāchārya and his son Viṭṭhalanātha had each left four disciples, all of whom were great poets in Hindi. These eight poets are called Ashṭachhāpa (eight seals) as their writing in Braja-bhāshā was considered to be of highest perfection worthy to be followed.

The four disciples of Vallabha were Sūradāsa, Krishṇa Dāsa Payahārī, Paramānanda Dāsa and Kumbhan Dāsa. Those of Viṭṭhalanātha were Chaturbhuj Dāsa, Chhitsvāmī, Nanda Dāsa and Govinda Dāsa. All of them flourished during the middle of the sixteenth century (F. E. Keay, *Hindi Literature*, the Heritage of India Series, London, 1933, p. 65). Of all the poets included in the Ashṭachhāpa, Sūradāsa is the greatest, whose fame as a Hindi poet is only next to that of Tulsī Dāsa, the celebrated author of the *Rāma-Charita Mānasa*.

From the *Chaurāsī-vārtā* (stories of the eighty-four Vaishṇavas) of Gokulnātha, son of Viṭṭhalanātha, it appears that Sūr was a great singer and that he derived inspiration from Vallabha to compose poems on the glories or *līlā* of Krishṇa. His fame as a poet and devotee reached the ears of the Emperor Akbar who paid a visit to him. He was blind and he died at Parsuli near Mathura. The *Bhāva-prakāśa* of Hari Rai informs us that he was born in a Sārasvata Brāhmaṇa family at Sihi, four miles from Delhi (Milton Singer, *Krishṇa*, Honolulu, 1966, pp. 173 ff).

Sūradāsa at the age of eighteen met Vallabha at Gaughat in Braja. Sūr got initiation from him who explained to him the mysteries of the tenth chapter of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*

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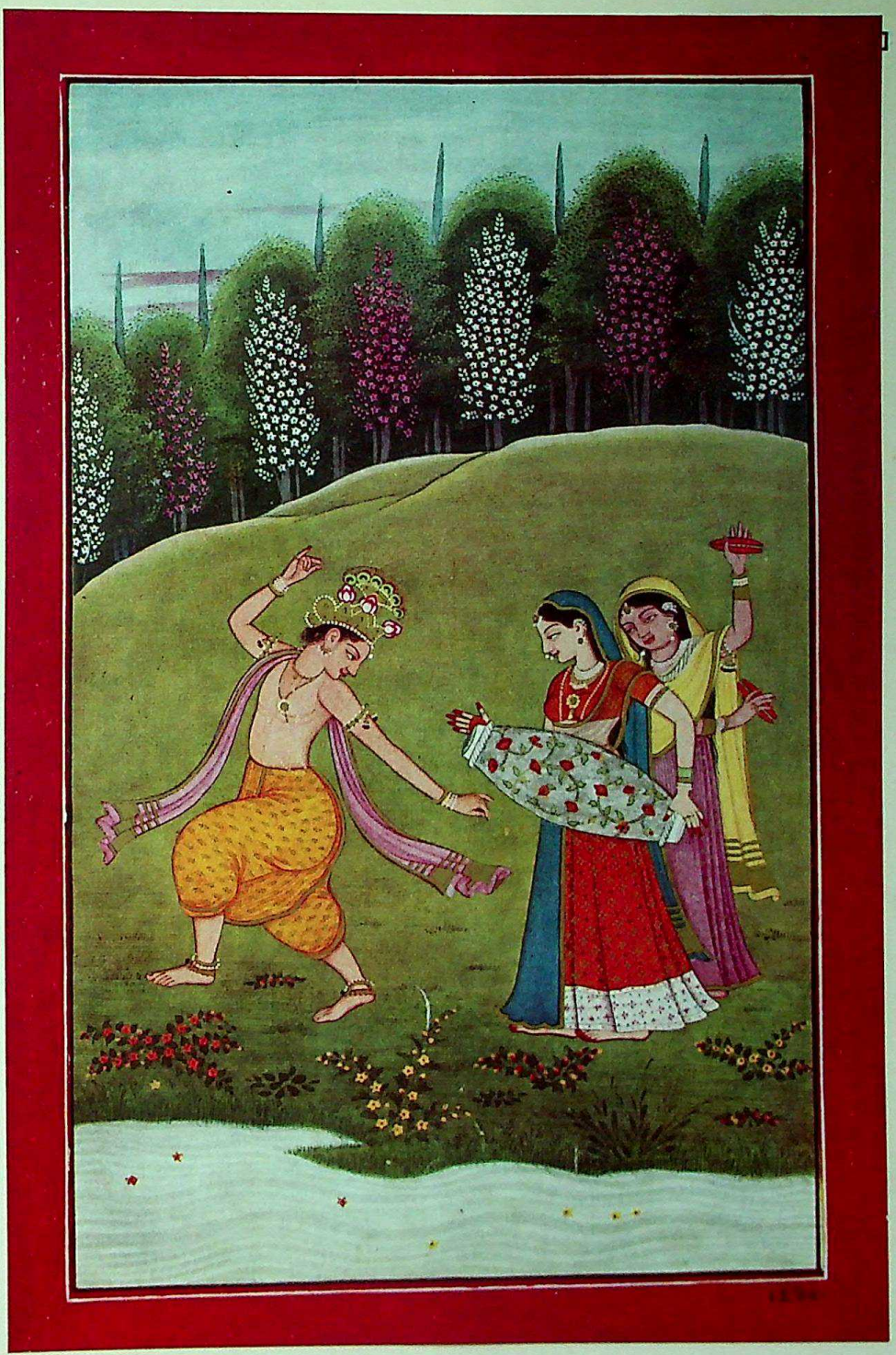

Rāga Vasanta, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi.

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as well as the contents of his own commentary, *Śubodhinī* on the *Bhāgavata*.

Some details of his life can be gleaned also from other works: *Bhaktamāla* by Nabhādāsa, *Bhaktavinoda* byMiyam Singh, *Rāmarasikāvalī* by Maharaja Raghuraj Singh, *Bhaktanāmāvalī* by Dhruvadasa, *Nagarasamuchchaya* by Nāgarīdāsa, *Vyāsavāṇi* by Harirām Vyās, *Muntakhāb-ut-Tawārīkh* by Abdul Qādir Bādāyūnī,etc.

It appears that Sūradāsa was perhaps born in samvat 1535 (A.D.1478) and died sometime between Samvat 1638 and 1642 (1581-1585). The following works are attributed to Sūradāsa: (1) *Sūrasārāvalī*, (2) *Sāhityalaharī*, (3) *Sūrasāgara*, (4) *Sūrasāṭhī*, (5) *Sūrapachchīsī* and (6) *Sevāphala* (Milton Singer, *op. cit.*, p. 174).

Sūradāsa's fame rests on *Sūrasāgar*. The other two which are also important in our discussion are the *Sūrasārāvalī*, describing the avatāras of Krishṇa and the *Sāhityalaharī*, describing the *līlās* of Krishṇa with various heroines (nāyikās). According to some scholars these two works are however not genuine.

Sūradāsa composed *Sūrasāgara* in twelve chapters on the basis of the *Bhāgavata* and included also the *dānalīlā* and *mānalīlā*. He used the main stories and adjusted them or adopted them in his own way. He has introduced also some new stories and elements in his treatment of *bhakti*. As already indicated, the *dānalīlās* and *mānalīlās* are Sūradāsa's own creations. His description of Krishṇa's līlā with Rādhā in the tenth chapter is not to be found in the *Bhāgavata*. Sūradāsa's Rādhā occupies a significant position as the Svakīyā of Krishṇa, while the medieval Bengal Vaishṇavism describes Rādhā as *parakīyā*. The response of the Gopīs to the sound of Krishṇa's symbolic flute is beautifully described in *Sūrasāgara*. Finally in the tenth chapter we have the bee songs (*Bhramaragītas*). Uddhava, a friend and messenger of Krishṇa and a follower of qualityless and formless (nirguṇa) Brahman goes to the milkmaids to teach them Jñāna Yoga and meets with strong criticism from the women and girls of Braj who are faithful devotees of Krishṇa (Milton Singer, *op. cit.*, p. 192).

Sūr's poems on Krishṇa are important not only for their devotional feeling but also for their literary beauty and psychological perception.

In the love of Yaśodā and Nanda, selfless parental affection which is ideal has been brought out. This selfless love is the core of the real Bhakti. Even if Krishṇa is away for a moment, Nanda and Yaśodā feel great pangs of separation.

The *bālalīlās* of Krishṇa attracted the attention of many other poets and saints also. The earliest of these poets is Bhāsa (early centuries of the Christian era). The Āḷvārs of South India (c. 8th-9th century) were the first to depict the sweet homely aspect of Krishṇa's childhood exploits to be followed by the author of the *Bhāgavata*. The thirteenth-century Mahārāstra saint Jñānadeva also composed poems on Viṭhobhā describing him as child Krishṇa.

Among the other Hindi poets on Krishṇaite themes mention may be made of Nanda Dāsa, who was a disciple of Viṭṭhalanātha. His *Pañchādhyāyī* (which is in imitation of the Sanskrit *Gīta-Govinda*, is a well-known composition. About his poetic excellence there is a popular proverb: *Aur sab gariyā Nand Dās jariyā:* "All others are simply founders (of meters), but Nand Dāsa is the artificer (who joins the pieces of metal into a composite whole)." (F. E. Keay, *op. cit.*, p. 66). He wrote also on the *Nāyikā-bheda*. The book in question on the subject is the *Rasamañjarī* which describes Krishṇa as the centre of all the rasas or flavours (Hajari prasad Dvivedi, *Hindi Sahitya, Uskā Udbhava aur Vikāsa*, 1964, p. 190).

We may refer here also to a Muhammadan Vaishṇava saint, Sujan Rasakhana, who was a disciple of Viṭṭhalanātha. He is the author of two books, called the *Sujan Rasakhana* and the *Premavāṭikā*, showing his intimate devotion to Krishṇa (Hajari prasad Dvivedi, *op. cit.*, p. 133).

One of the important Bhakti books which throws considerable light on the popularity of Vaishṇavism in north India is the *Bhaktamāla* by Nabha Dāsa who flourished between 1585 and 1623. Nābhāji was a disciple of Agra Dāsa who asked him to write the garland of Vaishṇava saints (J. N. Farquhar, *op. cit.*, p. 317).

In Garhwal arose in the 18th-19th century a fine School of painting with the Krishṇa theme as a main source of inspriation.

Vaishṇavism has a continuous history in the land of its origin. Till today Vrindavana, where Krishṇa spent his early days, commands the highest respect of the Vaishṇavas.

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EASTERN INDIA

BIHAR

THOUGH opposed by Jarāsandha, the king of Rajagriha, Krishṇa worship became popular in Bihar quite early. Megasthenes, Greek Ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya (4th century B.C.), ascribes the origin of the city of Pāṭaliputra to Heracles (Krishṇa) who commissioned the superhuman genii to construct the palaces and buildings in the city.[1] Whatever may be the truth, one thing that is clear from the statement is that the name and glory of Krishṇa were widely known to the people during this period.

Krishṇa worship continued to be popular with the passage of time. Some scholars have presumed that though the Bhāgavata sect is not specifically mentioned in the Aśokan inscriptions, the Bhāgavatas seem to have been included under the term "Sarvapāshaṇḍas". The Śuṅga-Kushāṇa times (second century B.C.-second century A.D.) saw the emergence of the cult as a very popular religion. In Bihar, several interesting finds on the theme have come to our knowledge. The foremost of these finds is the Ekānamśā triad[2] in stone from Devangarh, Gaya, now housed in the Patna Museum, Patna. The triad consists of Balarāma, Ekānamśā and Vāsudeva, shown separately. All the three figures are standing. Balarāma is distinguished by the presence of a snake-hood behind his head. His right hand is raised in the *abhaya* pose. The left hand rests on the waist holding a *siṁha-lāṅgala* (plough with lion-faced share). He wears a headdress with a lateral knot on the left side. Ekānamśā has her right hand in *abhaya* pose and the left hand rests on her waist. Vāsudeva-Krishṇa alone is four-armed; the back right and left hands hold a *gadā* and *chakra* respectively. The front right hand is raised in the *abhaya* pose and the left rests on the waist and holds a *śaṅkha*.[3] Again, the seals discovered in Basarh would show that Vaishṇavism was in a flourishing condition in Bihar during the third and fourth centuries. A large number of these seals bear Vaishṇavite symbols, like the *śaṅkha* and *chakra*. The personal names occurring on some of them are Hari, Harigupta, Varāha, Varāhadatta, Keśava, Keśavadatta, Krishṇadaṭṭa, Vāsudeva and several others indicating Vaishṇava affiliations of the authors of the seals in question.[4] One seal contains the legend: Śrī - Vishṇu - pāda - svāmi - Nārāyaṇa, meaning, Nārāyaṇa, the lord of the illustrious Vishṇupāda. Bloch thinks that the seal was perhaps issued by the authorities of the temple of Vishṇupāda, perhaps the famous shrine at Gaya. The seal would prove, according to him, the existence of this temple in the fourth century.[5]

The Baṣarh seals numbering 32 and 34 contain ornamental wheels on altar with a *śaṅkha* on either side. The seal, No. 32, bears also a Vaishṇavite legend: Jayaty-ananta Bhagavān s-Āmbaḥ; which has been rendered by Bloch as: victorious is the Lord Ananta (Śiva) with Ambā (Durgā). Since the emblems on the seal are without doubt Vaishṇava, J.N. Banerjea thinks that here Ananta and Ambā stand for Vishṇu and Lakshmī.[6] In support of his contention, he very appropriately draws our attention to the existence of a Vishṇu temple as Ananta-Vāsudeva temple in Bhubaneshwar in the medieval period. Further, one of the names of Krishṇa or Vishṇu is also Ananta as described in the *Vishṇu-sahasranāma*. Spooner also found in the course of his excavations at Basarh a number of seals with Vaishṇavite motifs. One seal shows a female figure on a platform on a barge, which J.N. Banerjea has identified as Vāṇijya Lakshmī, i.e. Lakshmī dwelling in commerce.[7] Another seal depicts Narasimha seated on a high altar[8]. This is one of the earliest representations of Narasimha.

The Gupta Kings who established their supremacy over a wide area were great patrons of Bhāgavatism. As a result the cult attained wide popularity during the period in this region and throughout their kingdom. Some scholars maintain that Samudra Gupta was a follower of Bhāgavatism. The Allahabad *Praśasti* describes him as *Achintya* echoing the ideas of the *Bhagavad-gītā*(I V, 7-8 and XI, 32). The *Chakra-dhvaja* and *Garuḍa-dhvaja* types of the coins of Kācha (whose identity has not yet been fully established, but who on the basis of the palaeography of the legends on the coins can be ascribed to c. 4th century)

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show beyond doubt that the king in question was a devotee of the Bhāgavata cult. Again, in Masarh in the Shahabad district was found a large and beautiful image of Vishṇu ascribable to the Gupta period. This image is housed in the Patna Museum, Patna.

Further, the Bayana hoard of Gupta gold coins include one of the Chakra-Vikrama type, belonging to Chandra Gupta II. The coin in question shows the god Vishṇu standing with a double halo round his person. He holds a mace in the left hand hanging by his side and offering by his right hand three round objects to the king standing facing (A. S. Altekar, *The Gupta Gold Coins in Bayana* Hoard, Bombay, 1954, p. 208).

The Chakra-Vikrama type of coin shows the deified personification of Vishṇu's weapon, *chakra*. From the Chakrapurusha, the king is receiving blessings. The *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā* refers to the worship of Vishṇu's weapons as of great benefit to the worshipper. This idea is reflected in this coin. Chandragupta II was a great champion of the Bhāgavata cult and it is natural that he thought of and introduced this type of coin.

It is, however, interesting to note that a fragmentary stone inscription from Mundesvari in Shahabad district records the erection by one Daṇḍanāyaka Gomibhaṭa of a shrine for Vinīteśvara within the premises of the temple of Śrī-Nārāyaṇa during the rule of Mahāsāmanta Mahāpratihāra Mahārāja Udayasena. The inscription is dated in the year 30 of an unspecified era. On palaeographic grounds, N.G. Majumdar refers the year 30 to the Gupta era, which seems to be plausible. The record tends to show that there existed a temple of Śrī-Nārāyaṇa during the fourth century A.D. in the Shahabad district.[9] Again, the Bihar Stone Pillar inscription of Skandagupta describes Chandragupta II, Kumaragupta and Skandagupta as paramabhāgavatas, i.e. the worshippers of the divine one, i.e. Vishṇu.[10]

Anantavarman Maukhari equally championed the cause of Vaishṇavism and Śaivism. So far his predilections for Vaishṇavism are concerned, the Barabar Hill Cave inscription states that he caused to be made and installed a beautiful image of Krishṇa in the cave of the mountain Pravaragiri. Krishṇasy-ā Krishṇa-kīrtiḥ Pravaragiri-guhā-samśritam vimbam-etat mūrttam loke yaśa [ḥ] svam rachitam-iva mud-āchī-karat-kāntimat-saḥ.[11] "He (Anantavarman) of unsullied fame, with joy caused to be made, as if it were his own fame represented in bodily form in this world, this beautiful image, placed in (this) cave of the mountain Pravaragiri, of (the god) Krishṇa."

The Aphsaḍ inscription of Āditayasena (seventh century) mentions the names Dāmodara and Mādhava, two very well-known appellations of Krishṇa. King Dāmodara-gupta, one of the ancestors of Āditayasena was so powerful that the poet who composed the Aphsaḍ inscription compared him in the act of killing his enemies with Dāmodara Krishṇa, the slayer of the demons: Śrī-Dāmodara-gupto, bhūt-tanayas-tasya bhūpateḥ, yena Dāmodareṇeva Daityā iva hatā dvishaḥ.[12]

Mādhavagupta of this line was also a very illustrious ruler. The poet says that as Mādhava (Krishṇa) whose feet were graced by the attention of the goddess Śrī was born from Vasudeva, so from Mahāsenagupta, (son of Dāmodaragupta) was born Mādhavagupta, 'finding pleasure only in prowess whose feet were graced by the attentions of the goddess of fortune.'[13]

There is a ruined temple of Vishṇu on a lower cliff on the Western side of the peak of the Mandara hill. To the west of this temple, there is a cave with a rock-cut figure of Narasimha. The Narasimha cave contains an inscription, dated the 12th day of *Bhādrapada* in the year 30. Considering the form of the script, this epigraph should be referred to the regnal years of the Guptas (i.e. 349-50 A.D.). The inscription begins with the well-known Vaishṇava formula: Jitam bhagavatā: "Victory has been achieved by the Bhagavat Vishṇu". The epigraph then introduces Bhagavat Virājaguhasvāmin, evidently the same god as Narasimha (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXVI, p. 303). Virājaguhasvāmin is called Vyakta-avyakta mūrti.

On the dado of the Hindu Temple, site No. 2 in Nalanda, there are several panels with scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Rāma's life, and the panels, 54 and 107 seem to represent Balarāma. These panels remind us of the terracotta panels of the Paharpur temple and can be dated about the seventh century. Of about the same period are the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes in stucco from Aphsaḍ. These scenes include Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa with Bharadvāja at Prayaga; Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa crossing the river on a raft; Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa in forest; Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa with Vālmīki at Chitrakūṭa, Rāma and Sītā seated together and Lakshmaṇa on the top of a tree, etc.[14] These *Rāmāyaṇic* scenes occur on the plinth of a brick temple which was probably built by Āditayasena.

We may discuss here also the Mangraon inscription of Vishṇugupta, now housed in the Patna Museum, Patna. The inscription records that during the 17th regnal year of the king Vishṇugupta, Avimuktajña while residing in the flower garden, attached to the temple of Śrī-Mitra-Keśava, established in the hermitage at Chundaskila, purchased

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from the house-holders of the village Angara (Mangraon) a *pala* of oil which was to last as long as the sun, the moon and the earth and presented it to the illustrious lord Subhadreśvara (Śiva). This inscription envisages that in the place called Chundaskila, there were shrines for Mitra-Keśava, i.e. Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa and also for Śiva, and this seems to be one of the earliest epigraphic records regarding the temple or shrine of the combined deity Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa.

Vishṇugupta has been identified by Altekar as the son of Devagupta and grandson of Ādityasena. This Vishṇugupta seems to have ruled during the first quarter of the 8th century (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 243 ff).

On the summit of the Patharghata hill some Vaishṇava carvings including scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as Krishṇa in the midst of the Gopīs, Krishṇa fighting with Chāṇūra etc., attributable to early medieval period, were found.[15]

Excavations by Licke at Jauria Dih, about 12 miles north-east of Hajipur on the road to Muzaffarpur led to the discovery among other things of a group of bronzes showing Ekānamśā triad, i.e. Balarāma, Subhadrā and Krishṇa (now preserved in the British Museum, London). These bronzes are dated in the year 48 of Mahīpāla. Dr. R. C. Majumdar reads the date as 148 and ascribes it to the Nepālī era. Whatever it may be, the figures can be attributed stylistically to c. 10th century A. D.[16] This shows the continuity of the worship of the Ekānamśā triad in Bihar during the medieval period. The earliest archaeological evidence of the worship of this triad in Bihar is, as stated above, provided by the Kushāṇa stone Ekānamśā triad from Devangarh, Gaya, now housed in the Patna Museum.

The earliest literary reference to Ekānamśā group occurs in the *Brihat Saṁhitā* (about 4th-5th century A. D.) which states that the goddess Ekānamśā should be placed between Baladeva and Krishṇa. The left hand of Ekānamśā should rest on her hip and the other hand should carry a lotus. The representation of the deity is not always strictly in conformity with the Śāstric injunctions.

It may be mentioned here in passing that Ekānamśā was the deity of the Yādavas as is supported from a statement in the *Kaumudīmahotsava*.

Shri J. C. Ghosh and several other scholars also have suggested that the images of Balarāma, Jagannātha and Subhadrā in Puri are the local adaptations of the triad, showing the superimposition of the Krishṇa-Vishṇu cult on the Śakti worship. It may further be noted that the principal object of worship in the Ananta-Vāsudeva temple is also the Ekānamśā triad.

During the Pāla-Sena period (10th-12th century A. D.) Vaishṇavism widely flourished in Bihar as in Bengal. Many Vishṇu images of this period have been found in different parts of Bihar. Some of them show also ten incarnations, though the lists are not identical in all cases. In this connection, the bronze images of Balarāma from Kurkihar and Nalanda are also worthy of mention.

A stone inscription of the 7th regnal year of Nārāyaṇapāla fixed in the wall of the Mahādeva shrine in the Vishṇu-pāda temple at Gaya opens with a salutation to Murārī 'who is the master of the world, whose image is pleasant-looking and who killed the enemy of the world' (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXV, p. 227).

Gaya seems to have been an important centre of Viashṇavism in the medieval period. As both archaeological and literary sources would indicate the main deity of Gaya was Vishṇu as Nārāyaṇa, Gadādhara or Janārdana.[17] The Krishṇadvārikā temple inscription from Gaya opens with an invocation to Vāsudeva and records the erection of a temple of Janārdana built by Viśvāditya, son of Śūdraka (om namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya. unnidra-nīlakamalākara-kāya-kāntiḥ svarṇābhirāma-ruchiradyuti-pītavāsāḥ). This inscription is dated in the 15th regnal year of Nayapāla (i.e. c. 1053 A.D.).[18]

There is in this temple an inscription of the famous Krishṇadeva-Rāya of Vijayanagar (16th century) and it appears that the temple was built by him and named also after him.

Again, it is interesting to note that the Gaya Narasimha temple inscription of Nayapāla, year 15, opens with an invocation to Lakshmī and records the erection of the Gadādhara and a few other temples. The Gaya stone inscription of Govindapāla (c. 1162), who is also called Gauḍeśvara; i.e. the lord of Gauḍadeśa, pays obeisance to Vāsudeva in the opening lines (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXV, p. 233). The Govindapur stone inscription dated 1137-38 A. D. opens with the glories of Vishṇu-Vāsudeva and Lakshmī thus:

"May Viśvmbhara (the supporter of the Universe) bestow (on us) his compassion—who embracing his beloved and thrilled with delight by the close contact of his breast with her bosom, is sleeping on the lord of serpents, on one side bent low by the weight of the god's lofty body, while on the other he remains upright under the very light burden of the goddess of fortune." (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, pp. 333-338).

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All this would prove the popularity of the Vāsudeva cult in Gaya during the Pāla period. The Vishṇupāda temple of Gaya is the main centre of attraction to the pilgrims. But very little is known of the original temple at the spot. There is, however, reason to believe that a seal from Basarh refers to an ancient temple on the spot which might have been destroyed as a result of vandalism or foreign invasions. The present temple, however, was constructed in the 18th century by the generous Ahilya Bai Holkar of Indore.[19]

Again, the present Gadādhara temple in Gaya is of comparatively recent origin. But as noted above, the Gaya Narasimha temple inscription of Nayapāla's times refers to one Gadādhara temple. This ancient temple seems to have existed at a different place and it may be the same, as some scholars believe, as the temple of Ādi-Gadādhara about two furlongs away to the west of the Vishṇupāda temple.[20]

The Valgudar Inscription, dated the 18th regnal year of Madanapāla (Śaka 1083=A. D. 1161) states that an image of Nārāyaṇa was set up by two devotees (who describe them as parama-vaishṇava) in the Krimilā-vishaya, i.e. Valgudar in the Monghyr district of Bihar (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 145).

As in Bengal, a new wave of Krishṇa worship swept Bihar in the medieval period, and Mithila became the main centre of this cult in which emphasis was laid on the loves of Rādhā and Krishṇa. Vidyāpati of Mithila (14th century) in his *Padāvalī* brought out this theme piognantly. In the Mathur songs of Vidyāpati, Rādhā turns herself into Mādhava due to constant thought of him. The poet has risen to a philosophical height in the *padas* (songs), dealing with separation (*viraha*). So far as his personal faith is concerned, some take him to be a Śaiva, and others consider him as a Vaishṇava. His influence on Maithili literature continued till the seventeetnh century, as is evident from the songs and writings of Umāpati of Tirhut and Keśava Miśra of Mithila. The burden of the poetry of Govinda dāsa was also the intense love of Rādhā and Krishṇa. He has delineated the theme both scholastically and in popular manner (*Bihar Through the Ages*, p. 549). Before we conclude, we may state that Chaitanya was very fond of the songs of Vidyāpati as he was of Jayadeva and Chaṇḍidāsa on the theme. Among the other poets who wrote on the theme, the name of Mānabodha (18th century) may be mentioned. He wrote the *Śrī - Krīshṇa - Janma. The Pārijāta-haraṇa* by Umāpati is a fine composition, though scholars are not sure of his time.

BENGAL

BENGAL is one of the most important strongholds of Vaishṇavism and Krishṇa cult. It is, however, difficult to ascertain when it was first introduced in this region. A four-armed Vishṇu discovered from the village Hankrail of the Malda district and again, another four-armed figure of the deity from Narhatta, Bogra district, both preserved in the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, prove beyond doubt that Vaishṇavism was firmly established in North Bengal about the 3rd century (S. K. Saraswati, *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, 1962, fig. 4, p. 13 and the *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā*, Vol. 1, 1975, pl. XI, 2). The first sculpture is stylistically ascribable to the late Kushāṇa or 3rd century and the second one to the early Gupta period, i.e. the 4th-5th century.

Contemporaneously Vaishṇavism was prevalent during the period also in other parts of Bengal as is proved by epigraphical sources.

The Susunia Rock Inscription (Bankura district, West Bengal) describes Mahārāja Śrī Chandra-varman, son of Mahārāja Simha-varman), as a devout worshipper of Vishṇu as Chakrasvāmī, and credits him with the dedication of the cave (in the Susunia hill) to the god (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XII, pp. 317 ff; Vol. XIII, p. 133 and K. N. Dikshit, *Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India,, 1927-28, pp. 188 ff). Chandra-varman has been identified by some scholars with a king of the same name of North India, defeated by Samudragupta, as described in his Allahabad *Praśasti*.

It is interesting to note that the worship of Vishṇu as Chakrasvāmī was popular during the Gupta period, as is apparent from this inscription as well as from the Chakravikrama type of coins issued by Samudragupta's successor, Chandragupta II.

The popularity of the religion in Bengal during the rule of the Guptas who were parama-bhāgavatas is also attested by other epigraphical sources. The Baigram Copper-plate inscription (Bogra district, Bangladesh) of the Gupta year 128 (= 447-48) tells us that a temple in honour of Govindasvāmī was built in Baigram by one Śivanandin, and his sons Bhoyila and Bhāskara, who lived in the villages Trivritā and Srigohali (situated within Baigram) purchased lands to carry out repairs to the temple in question and provide daily worship to the god. This provides the earliest reference to a Vishṇu temple in Bengal. (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXI, pp. 81 ff).

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Archaeological excavations at Baigram have brought to light the remains of a Gupta brick temple, presumably the same as the Govindasvāmī temple mentioned in the Baigram copper-plate.

Again, one of the Dāmodarpur copper-plates of the time of Budhagupta (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XV, pp. 142f) informs us that a merchant called Ribhupāla applied to the competent administrative authority to purchase lands in the Koṭivarsha-vishaya for the construction of two temples, one for Kokāmukhasvāmī and the other for the Śvetavarāha-svāmī. While all scholars agree on the interpretation of Śvetavarāha-svāmī as the boar incarnation of Vishṇu, opinions differ as to the meaning of Kokāmukhasvāmī, which has been identified with Śiva by D. C. Sircar, and with Vishṇu by H. C. Raychaudhuri and several others (*B. C. Law Volume*, Part 1, 1946; *Indian Culture*, Vol. V, pp. 432 ff, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXI, pp. 56ff).

The Gunaighar copper-plate inscription of Vainyagupta of the Gupta era 188 (507-508 A.D.) mentions a temple of Pradyumneśvara, a form of Vishṇu or Harihara (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, p. 53 ff). Gunaighar is situated in the Tippera district, Bangladesh.

The Dāmodarpur copper-plate inscription of the Gupta year 224 (543-44 A.D.) mentions one Kulaputra Amritadeva (who belonged to Ayodhya) as applying to the administrative officer of Koṭivarsha in Puṇḍravardhana *Bhukti* for a plot of land with a view to carrying out repairs to the Śvetavarāha temple situated in the forest region (K. G. Goswami, *A Study of Vaishṇavism*, Calcutta, 1956 p. 24). The popularity of Vaishṇavism in Bengal during the Gupta period is also evident from many personal names with Vaishṇavite affiliations as mentioned in various inscriptions, i.e. the Karamadanda, Dhanaidaha, Gunaighar, Mallasarul and Faridpur copper-plates of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods (S. C. Mukherji, *A Study of Vaishṇavism in Ancient and Medieval Bengal*, Calcutta, 1966, p. 14).

The Tipperah copper-plate grant of Lokanātha (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, p. 88; *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XV, p. 301), the Kālāpur copper-plate of Sāmanta Maruṇḍanātha (the *Copper-plates af Sylhet* by Kamala Kanta Gupta, 1967, pp. 70-71), the Kailan grant of Śrīdhāraṇa Rāta (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXII, p. 269) and the Mallia grant (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IX, p. 43 ff) further show the popularity of Vaishṇavism in Bengal during the period under review. The Tipperah grant of Lokanātha, c. 7th century A.D., refers to the worship of the god Ananta-Nārāyaṇa, i.e. Śeshaśāyī Vishṇu and it bears on its seal the figure of the Gajalakshmī. The Kālāpur plate of Maruṇḍanātha (also of the same family and period) states that Maruṇḍanātha donated a plot of land in the forest region for the purpose of *Balīcharusatra* of God Ananta Nārāyaṇa. In the Kailan grant, King Śrīdhāraṇa Rāta has been described as a paramavaishṇava. But he was a tolerant king and he granted lands also to his minister Jayanāga, a Buddhist by faith, to enable him to build a Vihāra in the capital city. The Mallia grant (6th century) mentions another Jayanāga who was a king and paramabhāgavata. His capital was Karṇasuvarṇa.

An interesting find having bearing on the history of Vaishṇavism in Eastern Bengal during the post-Gupta period is the discovery of a terracotta plaque, showing a four-armed Vishṇu with the Vaishṇavite formula 'om namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya' from the Rajasan site of Sabhar, District Dacca. On palaeographic grounds the plaque is ascribable to the 7th-8th century (*Annual Report*, Archaeological survey of India, 1927-1928, pp. 111 and 112, plate XLIX, fig. b). To the same period also belongs a beautiful terracotta figure of Vishṇu, found in Pokharṇa (*Bankura District Gazetteer, West Bengal Government*, p. 552).

Vaishṇavism continued to flourish in different parts of Bengal during the Pāla rule. Brahmanical and other religions including Jainism flourished side by side in their kingdom. One of the meeting places of different religious arts was the main temple of Paharpur, Rajashahi district, Bangladesh, ascribable to the time of the first Pāla ruler, Dharmapāla (C. 770-810 A.D.). It is interesting to note here that in Paharpur we meet for the first time with the plastic representation of the scenes from Krishṇa's life on a large scale in Bengal.

'Such a large number of figures relating to the Krishṇa legend, though without any general sequence, would indicate that a great centre of Krishṇa worship-the earliest known in Eastern India was located at Paharpur" (K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur*, Memoir, Archaeological Survey of India, No. 55, p. 37). "The stone reliefs at Paharpur form the most interesting and unique part of the discoveries ever made in Eastern India" (*Ibid*). The religious denomination of the temple is Buddhist, though a vast number of Brahmanical reliefs occur here. This is true in the case of also Nalanda as we have seen in the section on Vaishṇavism in Bihar.

Stylistically, the Paharpur sculptures fall into three different groups or periods, though all of them share in greater or smaller degree the art tradition of the later Gupta periods (see detailed analysis of the Paharpur sculptures in *Early Sculpture of Bengal* by S. K. Saraswati, pp. 37 ff).

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The Krishṇaite scenes represented in stone in Paharpur include the killing of Pralambāsura, the uprooting of the twin Yamalārjuna, Vāsudeva carrying the new-born Krishṇa to Gokula, Krishṇa holding the Mount Govardhana, Krishṇa and Rādhā (?), Balarāma and Yamunā, the killing of Dhenukāsura, Krishṇa and Balarāma fighting Chāṇūra and Mushṭika, Krishṇa with cowherdesses of Gokula, Krishṇa holding a lump of butter, Devakī handing over the child Krishṇa to Vasudeva, Subhadrāharaṇa (abduction of Subhadrā), etc. Two scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as Krishṇa uprooting the twin Arjuna trees and Yaśodā churning milk with child Krishṇa occur also on the terracotta plaques from Paharpur. Apart from these, there are also independent representations of Balarāma and Vishṇu at Paharpur.

From the preceding, it is clear that the childhood exploits of Krishṇa were well known to the people during the period under review and became a favourite theme for the artist's delineation.

The Khalimpur copper-plate grant issued by Dharmapāla from Pāṭaliputra refers to a Nanna-Nārāyaṇa temple in the Puṇḍravardhana *Bhukti*. Four villages were endowed by the king himself at the request of Nārāyaṇavarmā, his Mahāsamantādhipatī (the Chief of his feudatories) and his Yuvarāja Tribhuvanapāla to meet the cost of the temple of [Nanna-Nārāyaṇa], worshipped by the Lāṭa Brāhamaṇas .... (R. G. Basak, *Rāmacharitam of Sandhyākaranandin*, Calcutta, 1969, p. XIX). It is difficult to interpret the word Nanna used before Nārāyaṇa. It may mean the image of Nārāyaṇa established by a person called Nanna or in a place called Nanna. In Nepal we have four Nārāyaṇas, Iśānnārāyaṇa, Vishannārāyaṇa, Chaṅgunārāyaṇa and Śikharnārāyaṇa (R. G. Basak, *loc. cit.*). All these Nārāyaṇas are named after the different localities where they were established.

Further, the Khalimpur grant mentions also the incarnations of Vishṇu, Muraripu (Krishṇa), Rāma-Dāśarathi and Paraśurāma. All this, taken together with the Paharpur sculptures, would tend to show that Vaishṇavism witnessed great progress during Dharmapāla's time. Further, epigraphical sources would show that the popularity of the religion continued throughout the Pāla rule. The Varāha and Vāmana incarnations of Vishṇu have been mentioned in the Bhagalpur copper-plate grant of the 17th regnal year of Nārāyaṇapāla, who ruled from 854 to 907 A.D. (A. Maitreya, *Gauḍa Lekhamālā*, p. 55ff). The Gaya stone inscription of the same king, year 7, (*Memoir*, Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol. 5, p. 60 ff) opens with an obeisance to the Nrisimha form of Vishṇu, known also as Purushottama, Ekamurāri and Lokaikanātha.

The Badal Pillar inscription of Nārāyaṇapāla (*Epigraphia Indica*, II,160 ff), issued by his Minister Gaurava Miśra, throws considerable light on the popularity of Vaishṇavism. The inscription records the setting up of a pillar surmounted by a Garuḍa, and reveals that Gaurava Miśra was a great devotee of Vishṇu (see also *Gauḍa Lekhamālā*). He has been compared with Gopāla-Krishṇa, Paraśurāma and Purushottama, while his mother called Vavvā has been likened to Yaśodā and Devakī.

The Irda plate of the 10th century mentions one Nārāyaṇapāla as a great devotee of Vishṇu (Vāsudevapādāv(b)ja-pūjāniratamānasaḥ, verse 13), though the other two kings mentioned therein, namely, Rājyapāla and Nayapāla were respectively Paramasaugata and Śaiva. There is a great deal of controversy about the identity of this ruler. Some scholars consider him as the same as the Pāla ruler Nārāyaṇapāla, while others regard him as a Kamboja ruler (R. C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, Patna, 1971, pp. 190 and 191).

The reign of Mahīpāla I (988-1037) has yielded some important epigraphic records throwing light on the history of Vaishṇavism. The Baghaura image inscription of the third regnal year of the king was engraved beneath the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa, correctly identified as Trivikrama-Vishṇu by J. N. Banerjea. The image was set up by a Vaishṇava merchant Lokadatta at Samataṭa (S. C. Mukherji, *op. cit.*, p. 38).

The donee of the Bangadh copper-plate of the reign of Mahīpāla is Krishṇādityaśarman, son of Bhaṭṭaputra Madhusūdana, and grandson of Bhaṭṭaputra Hrishīkeśa. These names would show beyond doubt that the donee's family professed Vaishṇava faith (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIV, p. 324). The importance of the inscribed Imadpur bronzes of Ekānamśā group, carved during the reign of Mahīpāla, has been described in the section on Vaishṇavism in Bihar.

Before we proceed, reference may be made to an inscribed Vāsudeva image (c. 11th century) from Paikpāḍā-Beṭka, Bangladesh. The inscription on the pedestal of the image, issued in the 23rd regnal year of King Govindachandra (who was perhaps a local ruler), records that the image in question was set up by a devout Vaishṇava, a betel-grower by profession (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVII, p. 26 ff).

It is interesting to note here also the tortoise shell inscriptions (11th century A.D.) from Vajrayogini, Bangladesh (D. C. Sircar, *Journal*, Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol.

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Rādhā waits in vain for Krishna, Guler Style, 1760-1765, after plate X, Kangra Paintings of the Gita-Govinda by Dr. M. S. Randhawa.

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X, 1949, p. 105 ff) pointing to a syncretistic religious outlook during the period. The author of these inscriptions, Mānamraśarman, proclaimed his faith both in Vāsudeva and Buddha. Apart from showing that Buddhsim and Vaishṇavism were equally respected by Mānamraśarman, the inscriptions point to the complete acceptance of Buddha as an avatāra of Vishṇu.

The Gaya Krishṇadvārikā temple inscription and Gayā-Narasimha temple inscription of the year 15 of King Nayapāla (c. 1038-1055) (see R. D. Banerji, *Palas of Bengal*, Memoir, Asiatic Society, Bengal, No. 5, pp. 77 ff and *Gauḍa Lekhamālā*, p. 110) show that Gaya was a very important centre of Vaishṇavism during the time.

The Krishṇadvārikā temple inscription refers to the erection of a temple for Janārdana by one Viśvāditya. The shrines for Gadādhara and other deities were also constructed during this time at Gaya as the Gaya Nrisimha temple inscription would show (see the section on Bihar also). Again, the Śītalā temple inscription refers to the worship of the composite form of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa during the reign of King Yakshapāla (c. 12th century).

The Varmans of East Bengal (11th-12th century) who seem to have flourished earlier than Rāmapāla of the Pāla dynasty, championed Vaishṇavism. The history of Varmans is chiefly based upon the Belava copper-plate of Bhojavarman. They claim to be the descendants of the Yādava family and ruled over Simhapura, which was probably in Kaliṅga. It is not known when the Varmans came to East Bengal.

According to the Belava copper-plate grant, Jātavarman was the first to lay the foundation of the greatness of the family. His successors were Harivarman and Sāmalavarman. Both of them donated lands in honour of Vāsudeva (see the Sāmantasāra copper-plate of Harivarman and the Vajrayogini copper-plate of Sāmalavarman (R. D. Banerji, *Palas of Bengal*, p. 97; R. C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, p. 201). These inscriptions describe them as paramavaishṇavas.

Harivarman's Minister of War and Peace was Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva. Bhavadeva was a remarkable person, a politician, scholar and writer of a high order. He flourished perhaps between 1025 and 1150.

Bhavadeva's inscription begins with an obeisance to Vāsudeva: 'Om! om! Adoration to Vāsudeva. May Hari make you prosperous...'

As mentioned in the inscription, Bhavadeva excavated in Rāḍhā 'a reservoir of water (or tank) which gladdens the soul and mind of the company of tourists sunk in fatigue ...' He also erected a Vishṇu temple in the respective sanctums of which he placed the 'images of the god in the form of Nārāyaṇa, Ananta and Nrisimha, like the (three) Vedas in the mouths of the creator (i.e. Brahmā)." Further, 'he excavated in front of the temple a tank, which was truly the unique emporium of the world for the purchase of merit and of which the water was shady and as transparent as emerald. It shone displaying in the midst of water that wonderful temple of Vishṇu almost exactly as it is which on account of false imagery, caused the anxiety of the brood serpents (N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, pp. 40 and 41).

Bhojavarman was the son of Sāmalavarman. Bhoja (c. 12th century) issued the Belava copper-plate from the illustrious camp of victory at Vikramapura, which bears ample testimony to his allegiance to Vaishṇavism. It says that the Varmans, as mentioned above, belonged to the family of Yadu in which Hari (Krishṇa) manifested himself. The verse 4 of this inscription contains a beautiful description of Krishṇa.

"He (i.e. Hari) again in this world appeared as Krishṇa who sported with one hundred milkmaids, as the leading figure of the *Mahābhārata*, who was a worshipful being, a partial incarnation and the uplifter of the burden of the earth." This verse is significant inasmuch as it confirms the Indian tradition that Krishṇa of Vrindavana and Krishṇa of the *Mahābhārata* were one and the same person. So far as Krishṇa's divinity is concerned, he was still regarded as a partial incarnation of Vishṇu though some section of the Vaishṇavas looked upon him as God himself: Krishṇastu bhagavān svayam; (N. G. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 22).

Regarding the popularity of Vaishṇavism in the Pāla region during this period there are a few other sources to which we may refer now. The *Prabodhachandrodaya* of Krishṇamiśra (11th century) mentions a temple of Madhusūdana as well as his Danujamardana form. This temple was situated on the Mandara Hill in Bhagalpur.

Now to trace the history of Vaishṇavism during the later Pāla period we may refer to the *Rāmacharitam* of Sandhyākaranandin. It is a biography of the life of Rāmapāla, who reigned for 53 years (1077-1130) and regained the glory of the Pāla dynasty. Though Rāmapāla was a follower of Buddhism, Vaishṇavism and Śaivism commanded a wide allegiance during his time as the *Rāmacharitam* would clearly show.

The *Rāmacharitam* of Sandhyākaranandin describes by means of *ślesha* the double story of Rāma, King of Ayodhyā, and Rāmapāla, King of Bengal. There are several verses

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containing allusions to Krishṇa's exploits and greatness. For example, the verses 1 and 2 praise both Maheśvara and Krishṇa. The allusions to Krishṇa in other verses are his uplifting of the Mount Govardhana, his bamboo flute and peacock tails as well as his deeds of overcoming Bali and Kamsa.

It is interesting to note that the verse 7 of the *Kavi-praśasti* portion of the *Rāmacharitam* describes Rāmapāla as the new incarnation of Nārāyaṇa: abhinava-Nārāyaṇāvatāra (*Rāmacharitam*, edited by R. G. Basak, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1969, p. 99). This may indicate that Rāmapāla,though originally a Buddhist, developed leanings towards Vaishṇavism in his old age. This seems to be supported also by a later work called *Sekh Subhodaya*, describing Rāmapāla as a Vaishṇava (S. C. Mukherji, *op. cit.* p.51).

Now mention may be made of the Gaya stone inscription, issued in the 14th regnal year of the *gatarājya* of one Govindapāla, which, dated in V. S. 1232 (= 1174) begins with an obeisance to god Vāsudeva (*Memoir*, Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol. 5, p. 109) and of the Kamauli copper-plate grant of King Vaidyadeva (lst quarter of the 12th century, *Epigraphia Indica*, II, p. 340). The inscription of Govindapāla refers to various forms of Vishṇu, viz. Gadābhrit, Padmanābha, Rāghava, Śrīdhara, Nrisimha and Viśvarūpa. It is not known whether Govindapāla belonged to the imperial Pāla family or not. King Vaidyadeva was a minister of Kumārapāla, son of Rāmapāla. He put down the rebellion of Tingyadeva, and conquered Kāmarūpa and became its ruler for some time only. He was a devotee of Vishṇu and his grant opens with an invocation to Vishṇu in the Varāha form.

The *Kavindravachana-samuchchaya*, one of the oldest anthological works in Sanskrit, was compiled perhaps in Bengal in c. 11th-12th century A.D. (F.W. Thomas, *Bibliotheca Indica*, 1911). This work refers to many Hindu and Buddhist deities. One section has been devoted to the glories of Hari. It contains many verses describing the love sports of Hari with Gopis (Hari-Vrajyā and Asatī-Vrajyā). Rādhā has also been mentioned in some verses. Whatever it may be, the divinity of Krishṇa, that he was the same as the Purāṇa Purusha Nārāyaṇa, has been hinted in this anthology. Further, Rādhā's close relationship with Krishṇa as his consort is also referred to in it.

Early Sena rulers were devoted to Śaivism. The Deopara inscription and Barrackpur copper-plate of Vijayasena (1095-1158) and the Naihati copper-plate of Vallālasena (1158-1178) open with the adoration of Śiva. But Lakshmaṇasena (1179-1205) was a Vaishṇava. The Anuliā copper-plate, the Govindapur copper-plate, the Tarpanadighi copper-plate and the Madhainagar copper-plate of Lakshmaṇasena and the Edilpur copper-plate, the Madanapāḍā copper-plate and the Sahitya Parishad copper-plate of the other Sena rulers (12th-13th centuries) open with the invocation of Nārāyaṇa. It appears that both Śaivism and Vaishṇavism were equally popular during the Sena rule, as in the Pāla times. This is also corroborated by the fact that the Deopara inscription mentions a Harihara temple, besides paying homage to Śiva in the opening verse (N. G. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 50 ff).

Lakshmaṇasena has been described as Parama-Vaishṇava and Parama-Nārasimha in some of his inscriptions (S. C. Mukherji, *op. cit.*, p. 70).

Innumerable Vaishṇava images were carved during this period as it was the case in the preceding Pāla rule.

It may be mentioned here that the Madhainagar and Bhowal copper-plate grants compare Lakshmaṇasena with Krishṇa-Vāsudeva and his parents with Devakī and Vasudeva (N. G. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 106; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XV, p. 300ff).

The Sena rule witnessed great literary activities in Bengal. The court of Lakshmaṇasena was adorned by great literary luminaries, such as Govardhana, Śaraṇa, Jayadeva, Umāpatidhara, and Kavirāja, all of whom were great poets and scholars. Of them, Jayadeva is the most celebrated for his immortal poem *Gīta-Govinda* which has attained great popularity all over India because of its enchanting theme, the love of Rādhā and Krishṇa. It is not only staged on festival days in many temples, but is also recited by devotees with great devotion.

It is generally believed that Jayadeva is a Bengali poet and his birth place is Kenduvilva on the bank of the river Ajay in the Birbhum district. But some Oriya scholars believe that he was a native of Orissa. The *Gīta-Govinda* exercised a great influence on the devotional literature of the later days.

The *Gīta-Govinda* describes Krishṇa's vernal sports in Vrindavana. Divided into twelve cantos, 'it describes the estrangement of Rādhā from Krishṇa, who is sporting with other maidens, Rādhā's sorrow, longing and jealousy, intercession of Rādhā's companion, Krishṇa's return, penitence and propitiation of Rādhā, and the joy of their final union (Dasgupta & De, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, University of Calcutta, 1947 p. 390 ff). It is apparent that Jayadeva's source of inspiration was not the *Bhāgavata* in which there is no mention of Rādhā. Further, the *Bhāgavata* describes the autumnal Rāsalīlā and not the

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vernal as in the *Gīta-Govinda*. He perhaps derived inspiration from other sources as were current in the society, including the tradition embodied in the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa*.

Though erotic in treatment, the *Gīta-Govinda* shows intense religious feelings on the part of the author and his theme. Jayadeva's fame spread throughout India quickly. As evidence of this we may refer to the inscription dated Samvat 1348 (=1290) of Sāraṅgadeva's reign, containing a verse from the *Daśāvatāra* stotra of the *Gīta-Govinda*, as a benedictory stanza. Again, the 15th century manuscripts of the *Gīta-Govinda* contain paintings in Gujarātī or Western Indian style. The best evidence as to the probability of the *Gīta-Govinda* being written earlier than 1200 A.D. is provided by Śrīdharadāsa's *Saduktikarṇāmrita*, which, completed in 1206 A.D. quotes from Jayadeva. Though not a book of theological nature, the *Gīta-Govinda* exercised a tremendous influence on the Chaitanya movement in Bengal. Krishṇa legends were so popular in Bengal during Jayadeva's time, that many contemporary poets composed verses in honour of Krishṇa, whatever might have been their personal faith.

Umāpatidhara, the famous author of the Deoparā inscription of Vijayasena, though a Śaiva by faith, wrote poems on the Matsya and Nrisimha avatārās of Vishṇu as well as on some aspects of the Krishṇalīlā, such as *Harikrīḍā*, *Krishṇa-Rukmiṇī* episodes, etc. (see the *Saduktikarṇāmrita* of Śrīdharadāsa, vv. I. 52.4.55.3; 1.55.4, I. 57.3, etc.). Śaraṇa, another court poet of Lakshmaṇasena, has also dealt with the love-dalliance of Krishṇa, as may be found in the *Saduktikarṇāmrita*. Dhoyī, who was a famous poet and wrote the Pavanadūtam, was perhaps a Vaishṇava by faith. Some of his verses on Krishṇa have been included in the *Saduktikarṇāmrita*.

Govardhana, the author of *Āryā-Saptaśatī*, was also perhaps a Vaishṇava. The *Āryā-saptaśatī* composed on the model of Hāla's *Gāthāśaptaśatī* is dedicated both to Śiva and Vishṇu. Apart from this, he composed many verses, describing the incarnations of Vishṇu (S. C. Mukhurji, *op. cit.*, p. 80 ff).

Aniruddha Bhaṭṭa, who was the preceptor of Vallāla, wrote the *Bhāgavata-tattvamañjarī*, a Vaishṇava theological work. Gopālabhaṭṭa (17th century), the author of the *Satkriyāsāra-dīpikā* and the *Haribhaktivilāsa* acknowledged his indebtedness to Aniruddha.

That Vaishṇavism was widespread in different parts of Bengal during this period is evident also from the copper-plates of Rājā Govinda-Keśava-deva and Rājā Īśānadeva (c. 13th century). The Bhatera copper-plate No. 1 contains allusion to God Nārāyaṇa who obtained Lakshmī as a result of the churning of the ocean with the Mandara mountain. It compares the activities of the King Govinda-Keśava with those of Krishṇa. Govinda-Keśava protected the people with kindness as Krishṇa saved the cowherds of Vrindavana by lifting the mount Govardhana.

The Bhatera copper-plate No. 2 of Rājā Īśānadeva opens with an adoration to Nārāyaṇa. "May the beloved of the goddess Kamalā (Lakshmī), i.e. god Vishṇu, dark-blue in colour like the reputed sapphire, dressed in clothes of the brilliance of gold as if lighting dazzling in a cloud protect you all." Īśānadeva built a lofty temple in honour of Krishṇa, the slayer of Kamsa, and also one such temple for Vishṇu, the destroyer of the demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha (Kamalakanta Gupta, *Copper-plates of Sylhet*, 1967, pp. 153-200).

The Sunderban copper-plate of Dommanapāla (1196 A.D.) contains on its reverse side the outline of the figure of God Nārāyaṇa, seated in *lalitāsana* on a wheeled chariot, while his mount, Garuḍa, is shown in front of him (*Indian Culture*, Vol. I, pp. 679-82). Though Dommanapāla was a Śaiva, the figure of Nārāyaṇa on the reverse of his copper-plate shows his respects for Vaishṇavism also. He was perhaps a feudatory of Lakshmaṇasena. Again, the Keoar Vishṇu image inscription (palaeographically ascribable to the 13th century) records that certain Vaṅgoka of Varendri installed the image in question with the pious wish that after his death he may reside in the abode of Vishṇu (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVII, p. 355).

During the post-Sena period there was a Vishṇu temple in Triveṇī-Saptagrāma, which was converted into a mosque in 1298 by Ghazi Zāffar Khān and a mausoleum was built in the temple area subsequently. Descriptive lables of the converted temple refer to various scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhāgavata*. The Krishṇaite scenes include the killing of Chāṇūra, Gopī-vastra-haraṇa, the fight between Śrīkrishṇa and Bāṇāsura and the slaying of Kamsa by Krishṇa (S. C. Mukherji, *op. cit.*, p. 76).

The Deva rulers of East Bengal whose territory included the districts of Tipperah, Noakhali and Chittagong were Parama-Vaishṇavas. Their names: Purushottama, Madhumathana, Vāsudeva and Dāmodara indicate beyond doubt that these rulers belonged to a Vaishṇava family (R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, p. 253). The palaeography of the inscriptions of the Devas show that they belonged to the end of the 12th century and early 13th century. The official seal of the Devas contain the figure of Vishṇu on Garuḍa.

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The history of Vaishṇavism during the subsequent period, i.e. from the 14th century onwards is based mainly upon literary sources. The construction of temples and erection of images became rare for want of patronage with the advent of Turkish rule in Bengal about 1202 A. D. The religious sentiments of the people found expression in popular songs. Among the Vaishṇava poets and authors who flourished before Chaitanyadeva, mention may be made of Krittivāsa, who wrote the Bengali version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Chaṇḍidās, and Mālādhar Vasu. The lyrics of Chaṇḍidās on the theme of love without any carnal desire and the *Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya* of Mālādhar Vasu were held in very high esteem by Chaitanya. Mālādhara Vasu, the first translator of the *Bhāgavata* in Bengali, was a courtier of the Emperor Husain Shah . Before we describe the importance of these two poets in the field of Vaishṇava devotional literature, we may refer to the works of Rāyamukuṭa, as well as to the *Prākrita Kalpataru*, the *Prākrita-piṅgala*, Chaturbhuja's *Haricharita*, etc. which throw light on the medieval Bengal Vaishṇavism. Rāyamukuṭa was a court poet of Sultan Jalāl-ud-dīn of Bengal (14th century). He was a Brahmin of the Mahintāpanīyā Gāñi and composed several works, such as the *Smritiratnahāra*, *Vyākhyā-Brihaspati*, *Nirṇaya-Brihaspati*, *Padachandrikā*, etc. (S. C. Mukherji, *op. cit.*, p. 114 and Dr. R. C. Hazra, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol.XVII, p.446 ff). He was a Parama-Vaishṇava and most of his works begin with invocation of Vishṇu. The *Prākrita-kalpataru* of Rāmaśarman (Mukherji, *op. cit.*, p. 119) deals with the exploits of Krishṇa as well as his love-romance with Rādhā and other Gopīs. The *Prākrita-Piṅgala* (composed in the 14th century A.D.) mentions Krishṇa's greatness over other gods. It describes also Krishṇa's sports with Rādhā. Chaturbhuja's *Haricharita-kāvya* (15th century) is a work in 13 cantos, describing Krishṇa's adventures. The poet was a follower of Krishṇa at whose lotus feet he took shelter for crossing the sea of worldly existence.

Chaṇḍidās, who was a great exponent of the Sahajiyā cult and whose love-lyrics are a unique treasure in Bengali language flourished in the 14th century. His birth place was probably Chhatna but he seemed to have settled in Nannur, 10 miles to the south-east of Bolpur, where he fell in love with a young washerwoman called Rāmī. Chaṇḍidās echoed in his love-songs the sentiment of the Sahajiyās, i.e. salvation through love untarnished by carnal desire. He says, "Hear me, friends, how salvation can be attained through love for a woman: Reduce your body to a dry log (i.e. make it such as to be quite unmoved by passions). He that pervades the universe, unseen by all, is approachable only by him who knows the secret of pure love" (D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta, 1954, p. 48).

Chaṇḍidās following the Sahajiyās advocated *parakīyā rasa*, sometimes identified with *Madhura rasa*. It is not the legitimate love sanctified by the society; this love is directed towards some beautiful woman, other than one's wife. This love, beset with insurmountable difficulties, has a great romantic flavour, inasmuch as one's desire to meet the other becomes irresistible. This sentiment of *parakīyā* love has been adopted as a divine symbol for the representation of love of Rādhā and Krishṇa. Vidyāpati Thākur of Mithila is another great exponent of *parakīyā rasa* when he delineated the Rādhā-Krishṇa theme.

There are several poets bearing the name of Chaṇḍidās; one of them flourished earlier than Chaitanya Deva. and he seems to be Ananta Baḍu Chaṇḍidās, the author of the *Śrī-Krishṇa-kīrtana* which portrays Rādhā as an incarnation of Lakshmī. It is difficult to say if the author of *Śrī-Krishṇa-kīrtana* is the same as Chaṇḍidās who loved Rāmī and composed beautiful *padāvalīs* which were appreciated also by Chaitanya Deva.

Śrī-Krishṇa-kīrtana consists of several Khaṇḍas, such as Janma-Khaṇḍa, Tāmbula-Khaṇḍa, Dāna-Khaṇḍa, Naukā-Khaṇḍa, Bhāra-Khaṇḍa, Chatra-Khaṇḍa, Vrindāvana-Khaṇḍa, Vaṃśikhaṇḍa, Rādhā-viraha-Khaṇḍa, etc. describing the Vraja-līlā of Krishṇa. Rādhā's deep yearning for Krishṇa is beautifully described in the Vaṃśīkhaṇḍa.

Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya by Mālādhar Vasu is the earliest of all *Krishṇa-charitas* in regional languages. It describes in graceful style the episodes of Krishṇa's life to be found in the 10th and 11th chapters of the *Bhāgavata*. This work was commenced in 1473 A.D. and completed in 1480 A.D. In recognition of his literary services Emperor Husain Shah conferred on Mālādhar Vasu the title of Guṇarāj Khān. This book was appreciated by Śrī Chaitanya (D. C. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 205).

Mālādhar Vasu was born in Kulinagrāma. Haridās Thākur (known as Yavana Haridās) established an *āsrama* in Benapole near this place. He and Mālādhar Vasu may be called the harbingers of Vaishṇavism in Bengal.

Śrī Chaitanya was so fond of this book that he praised it to Rāmānanda. Kulinagrāma, the birth-place of Mālādhar, was so much respected that the *Chaitanya-charitāmrita* praises it saying that even the Doms of Kulinagrāma (who tend pigs) recite the name of Krishṇa.

It goes to the credit of Mālādhar Vasu that he popularised Vaishṇavism even before the advent of Chaitanya, Śaṅkaradeva and Vallabhāchārya. The *Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya* throws light on the history of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal

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much more than the *Gīta-Govinda* of Jayadeva (*Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya* of Mālādhar Vasu, ed, by K. N. Mitra, Calcutta University, 1944, Introduction).

The advent of Chaitanya is a turning point in the history of Bengal Vaishṇavism. His sublime character, scholarship and single-minded devotion to Krishṇa, whom he worshipped with the feelings of Rādhā, impressed the people very much. He encouraged congregational *Kīrtana* or recitation of the names of Krishṇa, which created great devotional enthusiasm among the devotees. He was so absorbed in the thought of Krishṇa that he very often lost external consciousness and fell into ecstatic trance. His body trembled and perspired and there were manifestations of joy in him, as he took part in the *Kīrtana*.

Śrī Chaitanya, though not the founder of Vaishṇavism, saved it from the degeneration into which it fell during this time. He preached pure devotion and gave a new life to the whole religion. As a result of this, it became a strong religious force which helped the people to meet the challenge of the time.

During the time of Chaitanya, the society was overridden with external form of worship in which spiritual feelings and clear understanding of the real goal of human life were absent. The *Chaitanya-Bhāgavata* gives a clear picture of the religious outlook of the people of the time.

Chaitanya, whose household or original name was Viśvambhara Miśra, was born in Navadvipa in West Bengal in 1486. He studied Sanskrit and gained proficiency in Logic and Grammar. In 1507 he was won to the practice of the passionate bhakti by Iśvara Puri, a Mādhva Sannyāsī, and soon a large number of devotees gathered round him. Among them the most prominent was Advaitāchārya, an old scholar, and Nityānanda, who adopted Mādhva teachings.

The teachings and theology of the Nimbārkas and Vishṇuśvāmins also attracted Chaitanya's attention. He inherited from Iśvara Puri emotional singing, and *Saṅkīrtana* and *nagarakīrtana*. But he went beyond the Mādhva practices and gave prominence to Rādhā in his thought and worship.

In 1509, he was initiated by Keśava Bhāratī, a Mādhva teacher, and took to Sannyāsa and adopted the name Krishṇa Chaitanya. He left his native land and came to Puri, celebrated for its famous temple of Jagannātha. He lived here till the end of his life, except for a short journey to the south and to Vrindavana. People looked upon Chaitanya as an incarnation of God, but he condemned all attempts to his deification. High position and caste were of no significance to him. It is the purity of conduct and devotion to God on which he laid emphasis. He combined stern asceticism with the emotions and vision of a poet. "It was Krishṇa's lovely complexion that he found painted in the newly-formed clouds and it was Krishṇa's flute that he heard in the songs of the birds."

Since he became a Sannyāsī, the number of his adherents increased and included Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, one of the greatest scholars in logic, King Pratāparudra and Rāmānanda Rāya, Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs and many others. Rūpa and Sanātana made Vrindavana their centre of activities. They were wonderful scholars and laid the foundation of the theology of the Gauḍīya Vaishṇavism.

Rūpa and Sanātana held high position as ministers in the court of Husain Shah of Bengal. But they were drawn towards Chaitanya's personality and teaching and became his followers. At his biddings they settled in Vrindavana and wrote books on Vaishṇavism and Vaishṇava theology. They were joined by their nephew, Jīva Gosvāmī who was also a brilliant scholar. They were held in high esteem for their erudition and austerities and devotion to God. They wrote in Sanskrit and their works are the most authoritative in Vaishṇava theology (J. N. Farquhar, *An outline of the Religious Literature of India*, Patna, 1966, p. 307 ff; D. C. Sen *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta, 1954, p. 432 ff).

"Sanātana wrote annotations on *Haribhakti-vilāsa*, which he called *Dikpradarśanī*. His learned commentary on the 10th chapter of *Śrīmadbhāgavata* is called *Vaishṇavatoshiṇī*. Besides these, he wrote *Bhāgavatāmrita* in two parts and a Sanskrit poem called *Līlāstava*. Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote (1) the *Hansadūta*, (2) *Uddhava-Sandeśa*, (3) *Krishṇa-Janma-tithi*, (4) *Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā*, (5) *Stavamālā*, (6) *Vidagdhamādhava*, (7) *Lalita-mādhava*, (8) *Dānakelī-Kaumudī*, (9) *Ānanda Mahodadhi*, (10) *Bhaktirasāmrita Sindhu*, (11) *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, (12) *Prayukta-khyāta-Chandrikā*, (13) *Mathurā Mahimā*, (14) *Padyāvalī*, (15) *Laghu-Bhāgavatāmrita*, (16) *Govinda-Virudhāvalī* and other works. Jiva Gosvāmī is the author of *Harināmāmrita Vyākaraṇa*, *Sūtramālikā*, *Krishṇārchana-dīpikā*, *Gopalavirudhāvalī*, *Mādhava Mahotsava*, *Saṅkalpa-vriksha*, *Bhāvārtha-śikshā-champū*, and a good many other works. A full account of these is to be found in *the Bhaktiratnākara*" (D. C. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 433).

Of the other great Vaishṇava devotees mention may be made of Śrīnivāsa Āchārya through whom the Vrindavana Gosvāmīs sent the manuscripts of their books to Bengal

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for their safe custody, Hari Dās, a Muhammadan, who had to undergo inhuman cruelties under the orders of a Muhammadan Magistrate because of his change of faith, Śyāmānanda (who was a Satgopa) known for his beautiful songs on Rādhā and Krishṇa, Gadādhara (1486-1514 A.D.), Uddhāraṇa Datta (1481 A.D.), Lokanāth Dās Gosvāmī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, one of the six Vaishṇava Gosvāmīs, Narottam Dās, Raghunāth Dās (one of the six Gosvāmīs, though a Kāyastha), Narahari Sarkār, Vāsudev Ghosh and Vaṁśivadan, and several others. Some of these disciples, especially the last three were poets of a high order, known for their hymns (padāvalīs) on Krishṇa.

There are many works on the life of Chaitanya, but the greatest of all is the *Chaitanya Charitāmrita* by Krishṇa Dās Kavirāj (born in 1517). It is considered superior in some respects also to *Chaitanya-Bhāgavata* by Vrindāvan Dās. Krishṇa Dās came early in life to Vrindavana and attracted the attention of the six Gosvāmīs, Rūpa, Sanātana, Jīva, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Raghunāth Dās and Raghunāth Bhaṭṭāchārya. He created a deep impression there and became their disciple. When he came to Vrindavan, a grown-up child, he had no education. But under the care of the Gosvāmīs he acquired proficiency in Sanskrit very quickly. His *Govinda-lilāmrita* and his annotations on *Krishṇa-karṇāmrita* show his great erudition. He also wrote several books in Bengali. At the age of 79, when he was old and infirm, he undertook the writing of the *Chaitanya-Charitāmrita* (a full biography of Śrī Chaitanyadeva) at the request of the Vaishṇavas of Vrindavana, inspite of the fact that there were in existence other works on Chaitanya's life, such as the Sanskrit drama, *Chaitanya-chandrodaya* by Kavikarṇapūra, and *Chaitanya Bhāgavata* in Bengali by Vrindāvan Dās. The book consists of three main Khaṇḍas, the *Ādi*, *Madhya* and *Antya* līlās of Chaitanyadeva in 15050 couplets. Krishṇa Dās completed the book after many years of hard work. This is considered to be the most authoritative biography of Śrī Chaitanya (D. C. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 413 ff).

The poetic visions and emotions of the Vaishṇavas produced a unique class of poems, the *padāvalīs*, i.e. the hymns or songs in honour of Rādhā-Krishṇa, describing in mellifluent language Krishṇa's Vrindāvanlīlās and his love with Rādhā. Besides Chaṇḍidās and Vidyāpati, among the other *padakartās*, mention may be made of Govinda Dās, Narahari Chakravarti, Yadunandana Chakravarti, Vāsudeva Ghosh, Lochan Dās, Ghanaśyāma Dās, Narahari Sarkār, Paramānanda Dās, Jñān Dās, Rādhāmohan Thākur and many others. These poems concern themselves not so much with the *aiśvarya* aspect of Krishṇa's life, but its *Mādhurya* aspect, as reflected in the love and bhakti of the Gopīs of Vrindavana for Krishṇa.

Following the composition of *Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya* of Mālādhar Vasu many other *Krishṇa-maṅgalas* (dealing with the episodes of Krishṇa) were written. Some of them may be noted below.

The *Krishṇa-prema-taraṅgiṇī*, by Raghunātha Bhāgavatāchārya, who was a contemporary of Śrī Chaitanya is an important *Bhāgavata* work. Śrī Chaitanya visited the house of Raghunātha Bhāgavatāchārya at Barahanagar, and was delighted to hear his *Bhāgavata* recitations, and declared that he had never heard so beautiful recitations of the *Bhāgavata* as those of Raghunātha. He was a great scholar with poetic gifts. And his *Krishṇa-prema-taraṅgiṇī* was held in high esteem among the Vaishṇavas. In his work there is no mention of the Gosvāmīs of Vrindavana, such as Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha, etc. It, however, mentions Śrī Chaitanya, Advaita, Nityānanda, Śrīvāsa, Gadādhara and Haridās (known as Pañchatattva). It shows that Raghunātha Bhāgavatāchārya composed his book before the Vrindavana Gosvāmīs attained popularity. Further, Bhāgavatāchārya declared the godhead of Chaitanya before Vrindavana Gosvāmīs did. (*Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya* of Mālādhara Vasu, edited by K. N. Mitra, Calcutta University, 1944, Introduction).

Śrī-Krishṇa-maṅgala by Mādhava is mainly based on the *Bhāgavata*, though it contains episodes from the *Mahābharata*, *Harivaṁśa* and *Vishṇu Purāṇa*. Mādhava has given a prominent place to Rādhā who is the nāyikā of the Vrindāvana-līlā. While Mālādhara has emphasised the *aiśvarya* (divine glory) of Śrī Krishṇa, Mādhava has given prominence to the *Mādhurya* aspect, i.e. the worship of Krishṇa through intense love. The *Dāna-Khaṇḍa* and *Naukā Khaṇḍa* (which do not occur in the *Bhāgavata*) occur in the book.

Krishṇadāsa mentions in his *Krishṇamaṅgala* Śrī Chaitanya, Nityānanda, Advaita, Svarūpa, Rāmānanda, Rūpa, Sanātana, Vrindāvana Dās and Mādhava Āchārya. If the date of *Chaitanya Bhāgavata* is 1548, Krishṇadāsa's *Śrī-Krishṇa-maṅgala* can be placed perhaps somewhere after 1558 (K. N. Mitra, *Ibid.*).

The *Krishṇamaṅgla* echoes the thoughts of *Chaitanya-Charitāmrita* in one or two places. So it is not known whether this book was written in the last quarter of the 16th or the first half of the 17th century (K. N. Mitra, *Ibid.*).

The book *Gopāla-vijaya* was written by Kaviśekhara. He has described Krishṇa's exploits up to Mathura. His original name

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was Devakī-Nandan Simha; his father's name was Chaturbuja and mother's Hārāvatī. He was an erudite person. He composed the *Gopāla - charita Mahākāvya*, *Gopāla-kīrtanāmrita*, and the drama *Gopīnātha-vijaya*. But all these books did not satisfy him, so he wrote the *Gopāla-vijaya Pāñchālī*. It is difficult to ascertain the date of Kaviśekhara.

Krishṇa-kiṅkara Krishṇa Dās, elder brother of Kāśīrām Dās, the author of the well-known Bengali *Mahābhārata* (1602-1603), composed the *Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya*. He has introduced in it many episodes not found in the *Bhāgavata* (K. N. Mitra, *op. cit.*).

Among the other Krishṇaite texts of the period mention may be made of the *Govinda-maṅgala* by Śaṅkara Kavichandra, the *Gokula-maṅgala* by Bhaktarama and the *Krishṇa-maṅgala* by Dvija Lakshmīnātha (D. C. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 206).

Śyāmadāsa, the author of the *Govinda-maṅgala*, belonged to Hariharpur in the Midnapur district. His *Govindamaṅgala* does not follow the *Bhāgavata* in toto; it follows in many places the *Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya* of Mālādhar Vasu. It is difficult to ascertain his date. He may have flourished in the first part of the 18th century. He belonged to a Kāyastha family of Hariharpur. His *Govindamaṅgala* is based more upon Mālādhar Vasu's *Śrī-Krishṇa-vijaya*, rather than on the *Bhāgavata*.

Abhirāmadās who belonged to the 17th century wrote the *Govindavijaya*. It begins with invocation to Śrī Chaitanya.

Balarāmadāsa composed *Krishṇalīlāmrita* in Śaka 1644, i.e. A.D. 1722. His composition betrays the influence of Sahajiyā cult on him. The Sahajiyās placed more reliance on the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* than on the *Bhāgavata* (K. N. Mitra, *op. cit*, Introduction).

Chaitanya advocated the worship of Rādhā and Krishṇa, which gained popularity in Bengal rapidly. His disciples moved from place to place and initiated people in large numbers to this new faith. The feudal lords of Bengal also came under the influence of this movement and in this connection, the conversion of Bīr Hambīr, the Malla chief of Vishṇupur, is worth-mentioning. The Gosvāmins of Vrindavana sent the manuscripts of their books through Śrīnivāsa Āchārya to Bengal for safe custody. But unfortunately, when they reached the Mallabhuma, they were looted by Bīr Hambīr's men. Śrīnivāsa came to see Bīr Hambīr and reported to him the loss of the precious manuscripts. The erudition and personality of Śrīnivāsa created a deep impression on the Malla Chief leading to his conversion to Vaishṇavism. It is said that Bīr Hambīr introduced for the first time the Madanamohana worship in the Mallabhum. He built the Rāsamañcha which is a pyramidal brick structure (end of the 16th or beginning of the 17th century). With the conversion of Bīr Hambīr into Vaishṇavism, Vishṇupur became an important centre of art and learning. Bīr Hambīr ruled from (1591-1616) and he was perhaps succeeded by one Bīr Singh, (who ruled between Bīr Hambīr and Raghunāth Singh I). The reign of Raghunāth was long and peaceful and he is credited with the construction of several Vaishṇava temples, such as the Śyām Rāy (Pañcharatna temple of brick, 1643), Jorbangla brick temple in 1655, and Kalachand (laterite, ekaratna) temple in 1656. These temples are known for their architectural beauty (Amiyakumar Bandyopadhyaya, *Bankurar Mandir* in Bengali, Calcutta, 1971, pp. 89-90, and plates; *Bankura District Gazetteer*, West Bengal Government, 1968, pp. 95 ff; 517-579).

Raghunāth was succeeded by his son, Bīr Singh II. His wives were Śiromaṇi and Chūḍāmaṇi and to their credit goes the founding of the Madana Gopāla and Murali Mohan temples, both built in 1665.

Bīr Singh II's successor was Durjan Singh who built the Madana Mohan temple (brick, ekaratna type) in 1694, renowned for terracotta sculpture. The latter kings of the Malla dynasty were also ardent followers of Vaishṇava worship and constructed a large number of temples, such as the Jor Mandir by Gopal Singh in 1726 A.D., Rādhā Govinda temple (laterite, ekaratna) in 1729 by Krishṇa Singh, Rādhā-Mādhava (laterite, ekaratna) by Chūḍāmaṇi, wife of Krishṇa Singh in 1737 and Rādhā-Śyām (laterite, ekaratna) by Chaitanya Singh in 1758 A. D. (*Bankura District Gazetteer*, West Bengal Government, 1968, pp. 98 and 99 and 570 ff).

Among the later shrines, mention may be made of Krishṇa, Balarāma, Nikuñja Bihārī, Kesar Rāy, Nandalāl and Śrīdhara temples. (*op. cit.*, p. 577).

Most of the Vishṇupur temples are embellished with exquisite terracotta panels, depicting Hindu gods and goddesses of various pantheons and scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgavata*, etc. There is, however, preponderance of scenes from Krishṇa's life in these temples as they were meant for Vishṇu-Krishṇa worship. The Krishṇaite panels include Rādhā and Krishṇa, Krishṇa's sport with the Gopīs, Pūtanā-vadha, Kāliya-mardana, Jala-kelī (water-sports), Vastraharaṇa (stealing of the clothes of the cowherdgirls), Rāsa-dance, etc. The Rāsa-dance is shown in circle, the inner circle shows Rādhā and Krishṇa and the outer circles show Krishṇa dancing with the Gopīs

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(Amiyakumar Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 35 ff, Prodosh Dasgupta, *Temple Terracotta of Bengal*, pp. 49-68). Quite in keeping with the trend of the Rādhā-Krishṇa worship advocated by Chaitanya, these temples show the *līlāmūrtis* of Krishṇa, rather than the terrific forms of Vishṇu.

Before we complete our brief survey of the Vaishṇava temples of Bankura, mention may be made of the large Śikhara temple of Orissan style in Dharāpāṭ. This temple, which is dedicated to an idol called Syāmchand Thākur was founded by one Advesha, a medieval Rājā of Dharāpāt, in 1616 or 1626 Śaka, corresponding to 1694 or 1704, according to an inscription. The shrine, a laterite structure, is about 60 ft. high.

Advesha seems to have been the vassal of a Vishṇupur Malla king. The Dharāpāṭ temple seems to be old in origin and it is quite possible that this old temple, which might have been associated with Jainism, was converted into a seat of Vaishṇava worship when Rājā Advesha was converted to Vaishṇavism (*Bankura District Gazetteer*, West Bengal Government, 1968, pp. 534-536).

The Pañcharatna Gokulchānd temple, situated in village Salda of Jaypur Thana was built by Chandramalla of the Malla dynasty. Here was also discovered a fine stone image of recumbent Vishṇu, now preserved in the Museum of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Vishṇupur.

During the 17th to 19th centuries many Krishṇa temples came into existence in other parts of Bengal, a few of which may be noted to show the widespread popularity of the Krishṇa cult in the state.

Within the Garhbati, i.e. the fort compound of the Bansberia Zamindars is the temple of Ananta-Vāsudeva, built in 1679. It is an *ekaratna* shrine with curved cornices and an octagonal tower. On its front facing east and also on two sides on the north and south are beautiful terracotta panels elaborately carved; the other important temple here is that of Hamśeśvarī which is unique in construction. (*Hooghly District Gazetteer*, West Bengal Government, 1972, p. 660).

In Guptipara in Hooghly district there is an interesting group of temples attached to the Guptipara Math. They are the Brindāvanchandra temple on the north, Krishṇachandra on the west, Rāmachandra on the east and the shrine of Chaitanya on the west of the Brindāvanachandra temple. Among them, the temple of Śrī Chaitanya is the oldest, which appears to have been built in the 16th and the early years of the 17th century, by Bisveswar Rai during the reign of Akbar. Inside the temple are housed wooden images of Śrī Chaitanya and Nityānanda, the two great Vaishṇava preachers of Bengal. The Rāmachandra temple belongs to the *ekaratna* variety. The structure has curved roof surmounted by octagonal tower. The facade and parts of the southern wall show terracotta panels depicting figures of gods and goddesses and scenes from the epics and the *Purāṇas*, mostly Vaishṇavite (*Ibid.*, p. 681).

The temple of Brindāvanchandra was built by Nārāyaṇchand Mallik of Calcutta in the first quarter of the 19th century. It contains the images of Brindāvanchandra and Rādhikā and the Ekānamśā group, i.e. Krishṇa, Subhadhrā and Balarāma.

The village of Haripal in the Hooghly district has the temple of Rādhā-Govinda in the Raypara locality, built in 1654 A.D. The Ray family of Haripal was devoted to Krishṇa and they constructed many temples, including one devoted to Rādhā-Govinda.

Krishnanagar in Hooghly district has the temple of Gopinātha built in 1812. In the sanctum are enshrined the images of Gopīnātha, Balarāma and Abhirāma Gosvāmī (*Ibid.*, p. 702).

Gosvāmī Mālipārā has been the seat of the Vaishṇavas for a long time. Bhagavān Āchārya and his intimate associate Chandraśekhera Āchārya lived here. The descendants of Bhagavān Āchārya built temples including the shrines, the Madana-Gopāla and Rādhā-Kānta (*Ibid.*, p. 678).

In Srirampur, lived in the middle of the 18th century a few south Indian Vaishṇavas belonging to the Rāmānuja sect. They established a monastery and a temple of Madanamohana on the ground occupied by the Walsh Hospital. About 1836 these Vaishṇavas left this place and the deity was removed from the shrine and kept under private care (*Ibid.*, p. 719).

At Antpur in the Hooghly district, the most famous temple is the Rādhā-Govinda temple, built by Krishṇamitra in 1786 A.D. The outer walls of the *Jagamohana* and some parts of the front wall of the temple are embellished with terracotta panels showing episodes from the epics and *Purāṇas* including scenes from Krishṇa's life: Krishṇa stealing butter, etc. (*Ibid.*, pp. 648-650).

The Krishṇachandra temple at Kalna, Burdwan district, was built by the Burdwan Raj family in 1764. During the same year was also built the Lāljiu temple. The Krishṇachandra temple contains many scenes relating to Krishṇa's life, such as Pūtanāvadha, the Krishṇa-Janmāshṭamī, i.e. Vasudeva carrying Krishṇa to Gokula, the bathing of Krishṇa, and Yaśodā dragging

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Krishṇa and taking him to task for some mischief done by him. The Ananta-Vāsudeva temple at Kalna was built in 1754. Among other scenes it also contains scenes from Krishṇa's life, i.e. Krishṇa fighting with Kamsa, Yaśodā scolding Krishṇa (Prodosh Dasgupta,*op.cit.*,pp.56 ff).The Madangopaljiu temple in Mellak, Howrah district, is of considerable archaeological interest (*Howrah District Gazetteer, Govt. of West Bengal*, pp. 606 and 607). Built in 1651, it is one of the earliest temples of the āṭchālā type. Bricks and other material of an ancient temple (Pāla period) were used in the construction of this temple. The black basalt image of Vishṇu on the south wall of the front porch is ascribable to the same period.

Apart from these, there are many other temples of Vaishṇavite interest in Bengal. While it is not necessary to mention all of them, we may end the present discussion with reference to a few other important temples in the other districts. The Chārbāṅglā temple and the Kālī temple in Baranagar, Murshidabad district contain several beautiful representations of Krishṇa scenes, such as Yaśodā churning butter, Krishṇa stealing the clothes of the cowherd girls, Krishṇa killing Kuvalayāpīḍa, Kamsavadha, etc. (see pls. 19, 22, 39 and 40, *Indian Terracotta Art*, by O.C. Gangoly, Calcutta, 1959).

The Raghunātha temple (1633 A.D.) in Ghurisa, Ilambazar, the Gopāla-Lakshmī-Janārdan temple near the Raghunāthji temple and the Dewanji temple, Hetampur (19th century), contain many scenes from Krishṇa's life. On the southern side of the facade of the Dewanji temple is depicted very effectively Krishṇa's departure for Mathura in a chariot drawn by horses, which the Gopīs are trying to hold back by falling on the ground (Mukul De, *Birbhum Terracottas*, Lalitkala, New Delhi, pp. 23-30.).

The Krishṇa worship in Bengal is still very popular thanks to the force of the Chaitanya movement. The Gauḍīya Vaishṇavas are activety engaged in spreading its message.

ASSAM

KRISHṆA's name is closely associated with the early history of Assam and Manipur. The demon king Narakāsura of Prāgjyotishapura was so powerful that he seized the daughters of gods and men and he had more than 16,000 women imprisoned in his place. He is also said to have carried off the ear-rings of Aditi. Krishṇa came to Prāgjyotishapura, killed Naraka, rescued the jewels and released the women and married them. Again, his grandson Aniruddha came to Śoṇitapura in response to a love message from Ushā, daughter of Bāṇāsura. Bāṇāsura imprisoned Aniruddha. Aniruddha fought the demon king bravely, but ultimately he could be rescued only when Krishṇa came to Śoṇitapura and defeated Bāṇa, though helped by Śiva and his hosts. The exploits of Krishṇa and his greatness were thus known to Assam since the epic times. It is interesting to note that in the *Śānti Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* Vishṇu is known as Prāgjyotisha-jyeṣṭha.[1] The kings of Prāgjyotisha traced their lineage to Vishṇu through Narakāsura who was born as a result of the union of the Mother Earth with the Divine Boar.

Coming down to the historical period, it appears that Vaishṇavism was firmly established in Assam during the 5th century. According to a rock inscription near the Umāchala Āśrama on the north-eastern slope of the Kāmākhyā or Nīlāchala hill near Gauhati (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 67 ff), Mahārāja Surendravarman excavated a Cave temple for the god Balabhadraśvāmin.[2] Scholars have indentified this king with Mahendravarman of the Bhauma dynasty of Prāgjyotisha, who is said to have flourished between the late 5th and early 6th century. That this family had leanings towards Vaishṇavism is apparent from the name of Surendravarman's son, called Nārāyaṇavarman. This ruling family owed its rise probably to the support of the Gupta kings. The Baḍagaṅgā Rock Inscription[3] describes the king Bhūtivarman as a devout Vaishṇava even though he performed an Aśvamedha sacrifice (Śrī-paramadaivata-parama-bhāgavata - mahārājāśvamedhayājinaḥ Śrī-varmaṇaḥ pādānām). Again, the remains of a temple found at Daha Parbatiya clearly prove that the Vishṇu worship came into vogue in Assam as early as the 5th-6th century.[4] Bāṇa (7th century) in his *Harshacharita* calls Bhāskaravarman as belonging to a Vaishṇava family.[5] The popularity of the Vaishṇava tradition among the common people can also be inferred from their appellations or personal names, such as Govardhana, Gopāla, Sudarśana, Keśava, Janārdana, Achyuta, Nārāyaṇa, Purushottama, Hari, Upendra, Vāsudeva and Krishṇa as mentioned in the Nidhanapur and several other inscriptions.[6]

K. N. Dikshit draws our attention to an inscribed image of Nārāyaṇa of circa 9th century A.D. from Deopani clearly testifying to the uninterrupted popularity of Vaishṇavism in Assam from the Varman period onwards.[7]

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Another Vishṇu image of the same period is in the Assam State Museum (B. K. Barua, *A Cultural History of Assam*, Vol. 1, Madras, 1951, p. 187). There existed in Assam a large Vishṇu temple ascribable to the 10th or 11th century as can be inferred from the sculptural fragments collected from ruins in the neighbourhood of the Sibsagar town.[8] Further, it may be noted that a beautiful figure of Muralīdhara Krishṇa occurs on the western gateway of the Kāmākhyā temple. The figure with a single necklace of pearls and a conical cap which is in the shape of a flame may be ascribed stylistically to c.10th century.[9] Another early figure of Krishṇa playing on flute and attended by two damsels has been noticed by Westmacott in the temple ruins at Chardwar.[10]

Vaishṇavism seems to have received a great patronage during the rule of the Pālas of Prāgjyotishapura. The Gauhati and Bargaon grants eulogistically compare Ratnapāla with Rāma, Keśava, Purushottama and Janārdana.[11] Further, the fact that the title Varāha was assumed by the kings, Ratnapāla, Harshapāla, and Dharmapāla prove beyond doubt that these kings were devoted to Vaishṇavism.[12] Dharmapāla's particular allegiance to Vaishṇavism is also apparent from the fact that his Pushpabhadra grant opens with an invocation to Vishṇu.[13]

Among the incarnations of Vishṇu mentioned in the inscriptions of the medieval period are Paraśurāma (Gauhati Grant), Narasimha and Rāma (Gua-kuchi Grant) and above all Krishṇa (Gauhati Grant and Tezpur Grant) who was the most popular of all incarnations. The Gua-kuchi Grant mentions also the sportive Bāla-Krishṇa as brought up by Yaśodā, while the Tezpur Grant mentions that he was the delight of the Gopīs.[14]

After the Pālas, the Deva rulers came into power. Viśvasundara-deva (A. D.1223) was a worshipper of Varāha-Vishṇu. But Vaishṇavism, especially Krishṇa worship, entered a new phase with the advent of Śaṅkaradeva.[15]

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Krishṇa and taking him to task for some mischief done by him. The Ananta-Vāsudeva temple at Kalna was built in 1754. Among other scenes it also contains scenes from Krishṇa's life, i.e. Krishṇa fighting with Kamsa, Yaśodā scolding Krishṇa (Prodosh Dasgupta,*op.cit.*,pp.56 ff).The Madangopaljiu temple in Mellak, Howrah district, is of considerable archaeological interest (*Howrah District Gazetteer, Govt. of West Bengal*, pp. 606 and 607). Built in 1651, it is one of the earliest temples of the āṭchālā type. Bricks and other material of an ancient temple (Pāla period) were used in the construction of this temple. The black basalt image of Vishṇu on the south wall of the front porch is ascribable to the same period.

Apart from these, there are many other temples of Vaishṇavite interest in Bengal. While it is not necessary to mention all of them, we may end the present discussion with reference to a few other important temples in the other districts. The Chārbāṅglā temple and the Kālī temple in Baranagar, Murshidabad district contain several beautiful representations of Krishṇa scenes, such as Yaśodā churning butter, Krishṇa stealing the clothes of the cowherd girls, Krishṇa killing Kuvalayāpīḍa, Kamsavadha, etc. (see pls. 19, 22, 39 and 40, *Indian Terracotta Art*, by O.C. Gangoly, Calcutta, 1959).

The Raghunātha temple (1633 A.D.) in Ghurisa, Ilambazar, the Gopāla-Lakshmī-Janārdan temple near the Raghunāthji temple and the Dewanji temple, Hetampur (19th century), contain many scenes from Krishṇa's life. On the southern side of the facade of the Dewanji temple is depicted very effectively Krishṇa's departure for Mathura in a chariot drawn by horses, which the Gopīs are trying to hold back by falling on the ground (Mukul De, *Birbhum Terracottas*, Lalitkala, New Delhi, pp. 23-30.).

The Krishṇa worship in Bengal is still very popular thanks to the force of the Chaitanya movement. The Gauḍīya Vaishṇavas are activety engaged in spreading its message.

ASSAM

KRISHṆA's name is closely associated with the early history of Assam and Manipur. The demon king Narakāsura of Prāgjyotishapura was so powerful that he seized the daughters of gods and men and he had more than 16,000 women imprisoned in his place. He is also said to have carried off the ear-rings of Aditi. Krishṇa came to Prāgjyotishapura, killed Naraka, rescued the jewels and released the women and married them. Again, his grandson Aniruddha came to Śoṇitapura in response to a love message from Ushā, daughter of Bāṇāsura. Bāṇāsura imprisoned Aniruddha. Aniruddha fought the demon king bravely, but ultimately he could be rescued only when Krishṇa came to Śoṇitapura and defeated Bāṇa, though helped by Śiva and his hosts. The exploits of Krishṇa and his greatness were thus known to Assam since the epic times. It is interesting to note that in the *Śānti Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* Vishṇu is known as Prāgjyotisha-jyeṣṭha.[1] The kings of Prāgjyotisha traced their lineage to Vishṇu through Narakāsura who was born as a result of the union of the Mother Earth with the Divine Boar.

Coming down to the historical period, it appears that Vaishṇavism was firmly established in Assam during the 5th century. According to a rock inscription near the Umāchala Āśrama on the north-eastern slope of the Kāmākhyā or Nīlāchala hill near Gauhati (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 67 ff), Mahārāja Surendravarman excavated a Cave temple for the god Balabhadraśvāmin.[2] Scholars have indentified this king with Mahendravarman of the Bhauma dynasty of Prāgjyotisha, who is said to have flourished between the late 5th and early 6th century. That this family had leanings towards Vaishṇavism is apparent from the name of Surendravarman's son, called Nārāyaṇavarman. This ruling family owed its rise probably to the support of the Gupta kings. The Baḍagaṅgā Rock Inscription[3] describes the king Bhūtivarman as a devout Vaishṇava even though he performed an Aśvamedha sacrifice (Śrī-paramadaivata-parama-bhāgavata - mahārājāśvamedhayājinaḥ Śrī-varmaṇaḥ pādānām). Again, the remains of a temple found at Daha Parbatiya clearly prove that the Vishṇu worship came into vogue in Assam as early as the 5th-6th century.[4] Bāṇa (7th century) in his *Harshacharita* calls Bhāskaravarman as belonging to a Vaishṇava family.[5] The popularity of the Vaishṇava tradition among the common people can also be inferred from their appellations or personal names, such as Govardhana, Gopāla, Sudarśana, Keśava, Janārdana, Achyuta, Nārāyaṇa, Purushottama, Hari, Upendra, Vāsudeva and Krishṇa as mentioned in the Nidhanapur and several other inscriptions.[6]

K. N. Dikshit draws our attention to an inscribed image of Nārāyaṇa of circa 9th century A.D. from Deopani clearly testifying to the uninterrupted popularity of Vaishṇavism in Assam from the Varman period onwards.[7]

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Another Vishṇu image of the same period is in the Assam State Museum (B. K. Barua, *A Cultural History of Assam*, Vol. 1, Madras, 1951, p. 187). There existed in Assam a large Vishṇu temple ascribable to the 10th or 11th century as can be inferred from the sculptural fragments collected from ruins in the neighbourhood of the Sibsagar town.[8] Further, it may be noted that a beautiful figure of Muralīdhara Krishṇa occurs on the western gateway of the Kāmākhyā temple. The figure with a single necklace of pearls and a conical cap which is in the shape of a flame may be ascribed stylistically to c.10th century.[9] Another early figure of Krishṇa playing on flute and attended by two damsels has been noticed by Westmacott in the temple ruins at Chardwar.[10]

Vaishṇavism seems to have received a great patronage during the rule of the Pālas of Prāgjyotishapura. The Gauhati and Bargaon grants eulogistically compare Ratnapāla with Rāma, Keśava, Purushottama and Janārdana.[11] Further, the fact that the title Varāha was assumed by the kings, Ratnapāla, Harshapāla, and Dharmapāla prove beyond doubt that these kings were devoted to Vaishṇavism.[12] Dharmapāla's particular allegiance to Vaishṇavism is also apparent from the fact that his Pushpabhadra grant opens with an invocation to Vishṇu.[13]

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and Śaṅkaradeva in their religious approach. Chaitanya's doctrine is based upon (*prema*) (love) and *bhakti* (devotion) and Rādhā occupies a very important position in it. Śaṅkara's faith, as stated above, is pure devotion and Rādhā has no place in it. Śaṅkara's deity is Krishṇa as Purushottama or Pūrṇa Brahman.[18] "He (Śaṅkara) comprehended one god Krishṇa, one service, the service of Krishṇa, the supreme Brahman. The worship of other gods and goddesses is strictly prohibited." (B. K. Barua, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

Śaṅkara was followed by Mādhavadeva, who carried forward his message of love and *bhakti*. His *Nāma-Ghosha* is a *magnum opus* in Vaishṇavite literature. Among the subsequent leaders of this movement mention may be made of Dāmodara, Vamśīgopāla, Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Hari-deva, Gopāla and several others of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[19]

The writings and teachings of Śaṅkaradeva inspired many artists to execute beautiful illustrations to the *Bhāgavata*. The *Chitrabhāgavata* is a fine example of the Assamese style of miniature paintings of c. 18th century.

According to Dr. Motichandra, the lyrical draughtsmanship, splendid colours and other qualities of these paintings distinguish them from similar *Bhāgavata* paintings from Udaipur and elsewhere. Śaṅkaradeva himself was a painter. He painted on *tulāpaṭ* the scenes of Vaikuṇṭha. "He got scenes of Krishṇa's life in Vrindavana woven into a piece of cloth 180 feet long, each miniature was provided with a caption." (N. K. Vasu, *Assam* in the *Ahom Age*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 312 and 313).

Further, the later Vaishṇava temples of Sibsagar and other places are the outcome of the popularity of Vaishṇavism in Assam chiefly as a result of Śaṅkara's preachings. Vaishṇavism and Krishṇa worship are still a vital force in the religious history of Assam.

The neighbouring regions of Assam also felt the impact of Vaishṇavism. In Manipur, situated on the eastern border of Assam surrounded on all sides by hills, Vaishṇavism is very popular. At present the Manipuris, however, are followers of the Bengal School of Vaishṇavism.[20] As the epic tradition goes, Arjuna came to Manipur and married the princess of the land, who is called Chitrāṅgadā and he had a son called Babhruvāhana through her. He married also the Nāga-kanyā, Ulūpī, a princess of the neighbouring region. It is said that Babhruvāhana seized the sacrificial horse of the Pāṇḍavas, and defeated his father Arjuna in a battle. Krishṇa came to Manipur to rescue Arjuna. Thus it appears that the Krishṇa worship is an age-old tradition with the Manipuris.

ORISSA

AS in Bengal, Bihar and other parts of Eastern India, Vaishṇavism, including the Krishṇa story, seems to have been prevalent in Orissa quite early.

Sten Konow finds a reference to youthful deeds of Śrī Krishṇa (Sirikaḍāra) in the Hathi Gumphā inscription: Sirikaḍāra sariravatā kiḍitā kumāra-kiḍikā.[1] Even if the interpretation of Sten Konow is not accepted, the sculptures of Anantagumphā point to the prevalence of Vaishṇavism in Orissa during the period of Khāravela, i.e. second century B.C. The doorways of this cave, as is well known, contain ornamental arches in one of which is a sculptured figure of Lakshmī supported by elephants on lotus flowers, which is a recognised Vaishṇava motif.

The history of Vaishṇavism in Orissa during the succeeding several centuries is uncertain because of the paucity of material on the subject.

A stone inscription belonging to the 12th regnal year of the king Skanda-varman (son of the king Bhavadatta of the Nala family) found at Poḍāgaḍh mentions the foundation of a pāda-mūla or foot-print of Vishṇu for the worship of which the gift of a temple and money was made. The record begins with a verse glorifying God Vishṇu as follows:

"That Hari was victorious, is victorious and will be victorious is not that. For verily the Divine (Hari) is Himself the Conquest and the Conqueror." This inscription is ascribable to the 5th century.[2]

Bhāgavatism, in which Krishṇa is the chief object of worship, became popular in Orissa as in other parts of northern India as a result of the patronage of the Guptas and their tributary or vassal chiefs. Epigraphical evidence would show that Vaishṇavism was gaining in popularity in Orissa during the 5th and 6th centuries.

The Bobbili plates of the king Chandravarman of the Pitribhakta dynasty describe

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him as the lord of Kaliṅga and as paramabhāgavata.[3] The grant, issued from Simhapura, is ascribable to the 5th century. Mahārāja Nandaprabhañjana-varman, another king of the Pitribhakta dynasty, has also been described[4] as a paramabhāgavata in an epigraph. The Māṭhara Chief Prabhañjana-varman was a devout worshipper of Nārāyaṇa[5] (6th century). In an inscription edited by Fleet, Prabhañjana-varman is called a paramabhāgavata.[6] That this family was devoted to Bhāgavatism is also supported by the Andhavaram plates which describe Prabhañjana-varman's son, Anantaśakti-varman also as a devout worshipper of Nārāyaṇa.[7]

The *Vishṇudharmottara* (which was compiled not later than A.D. 600) refers to the manifestation of Krishṇa or Vishṇu as Purushottama in Oḍra country (Odreshu Purushottama, *Vishṇudharmottara*, III, 125, 21). This would tend to show that the worship of Purushottama, later on widely known as Jagannātha, was gaining in popularity during this time.[8] It is interesting to note in this connection that the Sirpur inscription of Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna (7th century) begins with an invocation of the God Purushottama.[9]

The Vaishṇava legends are frequently referred to in the inscriptions of the Śailodbhava kings. The Puri plates of Dharmarāja say that his fame could not be contained in the three worlds even as the legs of Hari in the Vāmana incarnation.[10] About Dharamarāja's successor, Madhyamarāja III, the same inscription (lines 9-12) says: "The consort of Madhusūdana has today like a veritable housewife taken shelter under Mānabhīta's (Dharamarāja's) son and has all her previously enjoyed facilities."

Again, the Simhanātha temple in Cuttack district, stylistically ascribable to the 7th-8th century, though dedicated to Śiva, contains among other representations on its wall the figures of Narasimha, Trivikrama, and scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as the killing of Dhenuka and Arishṭa and the subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya, etc.[11] Krishṇa, as is the case in Paharpur, is shown here with *Kākapaksha*. An impressive stone relief of c. 7th-8th century from Orissa (the exact findspot is not known), now preserved in the State Museum, Bhubaneswar, showing Kāliyamardana scene is again an eloquent testimony to the popularity of the Krishṇa story in Orissa during this time.[12]

Though the early Kara kings (8th century) were Buddhists, the later monarchs of this dynasty showed an eclectic spirit. On the seal of the inscriptions of Daṇḍīmahādevī and her successors, occur a conch-shell along with a bull, the sun and the moon. Tribhuvanamahādevī was a follower of Vishṇu. Purushottama occurs in many other Orissan inscriptions of the period. The Neulpur copper-plates of king Śubhākara of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty[13] mentions four persons, one bearing the name Purushottama and three, Balabhadra. According to Jagannātha temple chronicles, the Somavamśī king, Yajāti Mahāśivagupta, usually identified with Yajāti Keśarī, is said to have restored the Puri triad, removed to a secret place for fear of 'Mogola'. According to some scholars, the so-called 'Mogola' refers to the Hūṇas. That the Hūṇas existed in the Indian scene till the 9th century is evident from the fact that King Devapāla is said (in his inscription) to have humbled the pride of the Hūṇas and conquered Utkala.

As to the sculptural evidence of the worship of the Ekānamśā group, Shri K. N. Mahapatra (*Śrī Jagannātha Smārikā*, 1969, pp. 49 and 50) draws our attention to a small brass plaque (preserved in the State Museum, Bhubaneshwar), portraying the images of Balarāma, Subhadrā and Jagannātha. All the three deities are two-armed and wear *mukuṭas*. Balarāma stands under a canopy of three snake-hoods. He has a *musala* in the right hand and a *hala* in the left. Subhadrā, standing in the middle, holds a full-blown lotus in her right hand and her left hand is in *Varada* pose. On stylistic and other grounds the sculpture has been assigned to c. 9th century[14]. Again, it appears that the sanctity of the Purushottama temple was well known during this period. A clear reference to the *Yātrā* of the god Purushottama is to be found in the *Anargharāghava* of Murārimiśra (c. 10th century). The temple finds mention also in the *Prabodhachandrodaya* of Krishṇamiśra (11th century) (sāgara-tīre sanniveśe Purushottama - śabditam devāyatanam, *Prabodhachandrodaya*, *Aṅka* II).[15]

Vaishṇavism in Orissa did not enjoy an uninterrupted popularity. It met challenge time to time from Śaktism and Buddhism. Śaṅkarāchārya visited Puri in the 8th century and strengthened Śaivism there.

Continuing the history of Vaishṇavism, some of the Bhañja kings (Rāṇakabhañja and Śatruñjayabhañja) described themselves as devoted to Vishṇu, though they paid homage to other deities also.[16] The study of early Vaishṇavism in Orissa makes it clear that Vishṇu did not enjoy an exclusive devotion. He was worshipped by the kings and people who paid homage also to other deities also.

The popularity of Vaishṇavism increased during the Gaṅga rule especially at the time of Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga. The Gaṅgas who came from Gaṅgāvāḍi in Mysore ruled over Orissa for over 500 years (c.895-1435). Though the early Gaṅgas were followers of

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Śaivism, the latter ones championed Vaishṇavism. It appears that the greatest of the Gaṅga kings, Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga (1076-1148) came under the influence of Vaishṇavism during the later period of his life. Rāmānuja came to Puri perhaps between 1122 and 1137 A.D. and it is quite possible that Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga came into close contact with him. The Lakshmī temple in the precincts of the Jagannātha temple was built perhaps as a result of Rāmānuja's visit. Choḍagaṅga's predilections towards Śrī Vaishṇavism may be accounted for by his close association with the Tamil country. His mother and one of his wives were Chola princesses. Choḍagaṅga was a great patron of art and architecture, and built temples also at Mukhalingam, Śrīkākuḷam and Simhāchalam, all dedicated to Vishṇu. But his greatest achievement is the construction of the Jagannātha temple. He also repaired the Kūrma temple at Śrīkūrmam.[17]

According to some tradition, the present Jagannātha temple was built by Aniyaṅka Bhīmadeva in 1190-98. But this does not seem to be correct as the Dasgobha copperplate of Rājarāja III (1198) credits Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga with having built the temple in honour of Purushottama on the sea-shore. Some scholars, however, surmise that the temple was begun by Choḍagaṅga and completed by Aniyaṅka Bhīmadeva.[18] That the Krishṇa-Vishṇu theme was gaining in popularity is evident also from the occurrence of the scenes from Krishṇa's life on various temples. Mention may be made of the *dadhimanthana* scene in the Liṅgarāja and Brahmeśvara temples, both of the 11th century, *vastraharaṇa* in the Megheśvara temple (12th century), the *Giri-Govardhaṇa* scene and representation of Gopīnātha in Konarak, as well as of Krishṇa with cows in the Chitrakāriṇī temple.[19] Further, we may refer here to the images of Balabhadra, Subhadrā, and Krishṇa carved in chlorite found in a dilapidated brick temple in Turintiara under Balipatna Police station in the district of Puri. The figures of Balarāma and Krishṇa are four-armed, whereas Subhadrā has only two hands. Balarāma has a seven-hooded canopy over his heads. On stylistic grounds, Mahapatra has ascribed these figures to c. 12th or 13th century (K. N. Mahapatra, *Śrī Jagannātha Smārikā*, Delhi, 1969, p. 50).

An excellent relief of the Ekānamśā triad occurs also in a side shrine of the Liṅgarāja temple in Bhubaneshwar, stylistically belonging to the 12th century. All this would indicate the enormous popularity of the Ekānamśā group in Orissa during the medieval period (H. Kulke, "Some Remarks about the Jagannātha Trinity", *South Asian Institute*, No. 147).

Choḍagaṅga was succeeded by his sons Kāmārṇava and Rāghava. Very little is known about their achievements. Rāghava was followed by his brother Rājarāja II (1170-1190). His brother-in-law, Svapneśvaradeva, built the Megheśvara temple in honour of Śiva. The Megheśvara temple inscription, however, compares Svapneśvara with Vishṇu 'who is the consort of Lakshmī, destroyer of Balī in the Vāmana incarnation, favourite of the Gopāla clan, doer of every exploit and who held the earth up in the Vishvakseṇa and Varāha incarnations (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VI, pp. 198 ff). Lakshmī rising out of the churned ocean has been compared with Suramā, the sister of Svapneśvara-deva.[20]

An important evidence of the popularity of the Krishṇa worship in Orissa is the Ananta Vāsudeva temple (1278). The main deity enshrined in the sanctum is the Krishṇa trinity, i.e. Ekānamśā, Krishṇa and Balarāma.

The Bhubaneshwar inscription composed by Umāpati, a court poet of the Gaṅga king, Bhānudeva, describes Chandrikādevī, daughter of Aniyaṅka Bhīmadeva III (c.1211-1238) as a devout worshipper of Krishṇa, and as one expert in music and dance, which enhanced her natural beauty.

"Gītajñā laya-tāla-nartana-kalā-
Kauśalya-līlālayā
Vālayādachyuta-bhakti-bhāvitamatir—
dattānurūpaśriye" (v. 19)
"Mugdhendivara-netra-nitya-nilayā
Krishṇena tṛishṇāvatī" (v. 6).

The inscription further tells us that Chandrikā built at Ekāmra (Bhubaneshwar) a temple of Vishṇu. She visited the temple and worshipped the gods, Baladeva, Subhadrā and Krishṇa (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIII, pp. 152 and 153).

Some scholars think that the verses composed by Umāpati were influenced by the style of the *Gīta-Govinda* of Jayadeva. According to them, Jayadeva's influence on Orissan poets was not only because of the fact that he was a great poet, but also of the fact that he was a native of Orissa.[21]

Satyanarayana Rajaguru seeks to identify Jayadeva with the Sādhu-pradhāna Jayadeva of the Liṅgarāja temple inscription with 'Jayadeva, the author of the *Gīta-Govinda*', (*Souvenir on Śrī Jayadeva.*, 1968, p. 8). According to him, Jayadeva lived in Kūrmapāṭaka (Śrīkūrmam of Śrīkākulam district) in about 1156-57. Dr. D. C. Sircar, however, while discussing this inscription interprets Sādhupradhāna Jayadeva as a chief merchant and not as the poet, Jayadeva.[22]

The Maharashtrian poet, Mahīpati in his book *Bhaktavijaya* states that Jayadeva wrote his *Gīta-Govinda* at Puri and married Padmā-

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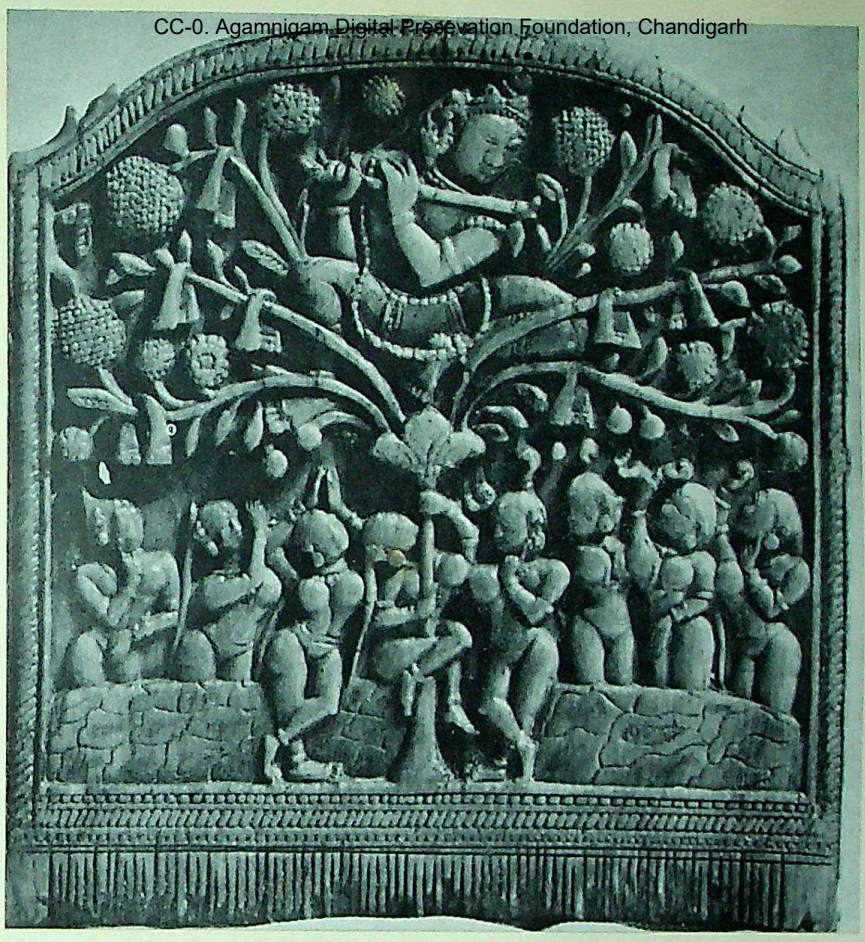

Vastra-haraṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of the cowherdgirls), ivory, c. 17th century, Orissa, National Museum, New Delhi.

vatī, the daughter of a Brāhmaṇa of the place.[23] Many other scholars also associate Jayadeva with Utkala.

But the widely accepted theory is that Jayadeva was born in Kenduli, same as the village of that name on the bank of the river Ajaya in the Birbhum district of West Bengal. Even now a *melā* (a fair) is held in his honour there every year on the full moon of Māgha. Further, he is traditionally associated with the court of Lakshmaṇasena of Bengal.[24]

Whatever may be Jayadeva's native place, there is no doubt that he had a close association with Orissa and his *Gīta-Govinda* had a singular popularity in Jagannātha-dhām.

Now regarding the cult of Jagannātha, one of the most favourite deities of the Hindus, its origin and antiquity are shrouded in obscurity. Its iconographic features are also peculiar, not being enumerated in the *Āgamas* and *Śāstras*, though in its present form the Jagannātha group is now identified as the Krishṇa trinity, i.e. Balarāma, Subhadrā and Krishṇa.

Many legends have grown round the Jagannātha cult. There is a tradition that the god was originally worshipped in a remote jungle by the Savaras, a tribal people of Orissa. A Brāhmaṇa, Vidyāpati by name, gave its clue to king Indradyumna of Malwa, who built a temple in Nilāchala on the sea-shore and installed the three deities there. Some scholars are, however, of the opinion that Jagannātha is no other than the Buddhist *triratna*, i.e. Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. They hold that the absence of the caste distinctions in Jagannātha-dhām is because of the Buddhist association. In this connection it may also be mentioned that Indrabhūti in his *Jñānasiddhi* paid obeisance to Buddha as Jagannātha. The Jagannāthadhām is popularly known as Purushottama Kshetra, and the orthodox scholars identify Jagannātha with Supreme Lord Purushottama (i.e. Vishṇu or Krishṇa) of the *Vedas* and the *Gītā*. As the antiquity of the Jagannātha cult is embedded in the dim past, it is not possible to solve the tangle of divergent opinions and come to any agreed solution as to the origin and nature of the cult. Whatever it may be, the Vaishṇavite association

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with the cult is the most patent as is seen in its present form. Purushottama, an epithet of Krishṇa, is also a well-known appellation of Jagannātha. Again, Jagannātha is worshipped in four images, such as Sudarśana, Balabhadra, Subhadrā and Jagannātha.[25]

Though there are copious literary references as to the sanctity of the Purushottama—Jagannātha, none of them are very early. The portions of the *Brahma Purāṇa* and *Skanda Purāṇa* referring to the Purushottma *Māhātmya* cannot be according to Dr. R. C. Hazra, earlier than the 11th-12th century.

The earliest Paurāṇic reference to the deity, according to the same scholar, is furnished by the *Vāmaṇa Purāṇa*, ascribable to the 7th century. The *Trikāṇḍaśesha* of Purushottama (9th century) mentions Jagannātha as a synonym of Vishṇu.[26]

Among the other literary sources throwing light on the subject, attention may be drawn to the *Kriyā-yogasāra* (9th-10th century) mentioning the worship of the Purushottma triad; Murārimiśras' *Anargharāghava* (c. 10th century) and Krishṇamisra's *Prabodhachandrodaya* (11th century) respectively referring to the *Yātrā* of Purushottama and the temple of the God in Oḍradeśa, as already noted; the *Tīrtha-vivechana—kāṇḍa* of Lakshmīdhara (12th century) mentioning the Purushottama Kshetra as a place of pilgrimage on the authority of the *Vāmana Purāṇa*; and the *Bārhaspatya Arthaśāstra* (12-13th century) referring to the place as one of the eight Vaishṇava pilgrimages.[27]

From epigraphical sources also it is definite that the cult of Jagannātha and the fame of Purushottama Kshetra were well established by the 10th century. The Sāradā Devī temple inscription of Maihar (Satna district, Madhya Pradesh) clearly mentions the God Purushottama of the Odra country.[28] The copperplates of the Eastern Chalukya king, Rājarāja (11th century) from Korumelli (Rajamahendrī district), and Kalidinidi (Kaikalur taluq of Krishṇa district), begin with Śrīdhāmnaḥ Purushottama. Further, the Nagpur inscription of the Paramāras of Malwa (1104-05) refers to Purushottama in the vicinity of the eastern ocean.[29]

Purushottama Kshetra is mentioned also in several other inscriptions outside Orissa, namely, the Pūjāripali inscription of Gopāla (11th century), Govindapur inscription of Lakshmana-sena (12th century) and a few other epigraphs.[30]

The earliest Orissan inscriptions referring clearly to God Purushottama of Puri are of the time of Choḍagaṅga (please see Mārkaṇḍeśvara temple inscription and the Nrisimha temple inscription of Choḍagaṅga).[31]

Continuing the history of Vaishṇavism in Orissa, Narasimha I (who succeeded Anaṅga-Bhīma III and built the Konarak Temple, at about 1236) worshipped the Jagannātha along with Liṅga and Durgā Mahishamardinī, as represented in two Konarak panels (one of which is now in the National Museum, New Delhi). This seems to be the first known sculptural representation of Jagannātha, though in Sākta context.

Gajapati Kapilendra and Gajapati Purushottama (1435-1497) were greatly devoted to Jagannātha. Kapilendra is said to have built the outer wall of the Jagannātha temple. Some of the inscriptions on the Jagannātha temple inform us that on the occasion of his visits to Jagannātha temple, he declared exemption of tax on salt and cowrie shells, and further that he made a huge gift of utensils and ornaments to Lord Jagannātha out of great devotion. He arranged for the dancing of the Devadāsīs everyday before Jagannātha and also the singing of Jayadeva's songs by four Brāhmaṇas. The reference to the *Gīta-Govīnda* in one of the inscriptions of Kapilendra's is significant inasmuch as it paved the way for the spread of the Rādhā-Krishṇa theme which became very popular during Chaitanya's time.[32]

Purushottma Gajapati was a great warrior and a patron of learning. It is said that he inflicted a crushing defeat on the king of Kāñchī, brought the jewelled throne of the monarch and offered it to Jagannātha.

Purushottama defeated the king of Karṇāṭa and brought an image of Gopāla from Vidyānagar (Vijayanagar) as trophy. In the prologue of his book *Abhinava-veṇīsamhāra* he pays obeisance to the feet of Nārāyaṇa. Kavīchandra Divākara-miśra flourished in his court. He composed the *Abhinava Gīta-Govinda* and attributed its authorship to his royal patron.[33]

Pratāparudra was an ardent Vaishṇava. During his rule a great wave of Vaishṇava religion swept Orissa with the advent of Chaitanyadeva. Further, Rāya Rāmānanda who was the Governor of Rajamahendra was a great follower and exponent of the Vaishṇava faith. As his devotion to the religion was great, he could not carry out his administrative duties well and had to resign from his post. He composed the drama *Śrī-Jagannāthavallabha-nāṭaka* depicting the love of Rādhā and Śrī Krishṇa. Krishṇadāsa Kavirāj in his *Chaitanya-charitāmrita* has recalled the erudition and devotion of Rāya Rāmānanda. Again, Kavikarṇapūra who was a great scholar in the court of Pratāparudra composed the *Chaitanyachandrodaya-nāṭaka*.

The Gajapati kings paid special attention

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to the Vishṇu temples.[34] The important Vishṇu temples of Orissa during the 16th century are the Gopīnātha temple at Remuna, the Ādi-varāha temple at Jajpur, the Sākshī-Gopāla temple at Cuttack and the temple of Ālālnath in the Puri district.

Chaitanya's advent brought to the forefront the worship of Krishṇa as the supreme deity in Orissa. Before that it is Vishṇu who received the highest allegiance and Krishṇa was regarded as an incarnation of Vishṇu, though some temples were consecrated in his honour.

Chaitanya made Puri the main centre of his activities. He lived there for many years. He exercised by his austere life and unique devotion to Krishṇa a great influence on the life of the people. He spent all his time in the constant adoration of the Lord Jagannātha. A large number of people from the kings to common folk became his disciples. But the foremost of his disciples was Rāya Rāmānanda, who, apart from being a devotee, was a great author and theologician. When the Master was in the most distressing condition due to his love-madness for Krishṇa, he comforted him by reciting verses of Vidyāpati, Chaṇḍidāsa and Jayadeva. Ramānanda's poems are referred to in various works, such as the *Padakalpataru* by Vaishṇava Dās, *Khaṇḍagītā Chintāmaṇi* by Visvanātha Chakravarty and *Padāvalī of* Rupa Gosvāmī.[35]

King Pratāparudra became an ardent follower of the Master and Gauḍīya Vaishṇavas. According to Vrindāvana Dās, the Master blessed the king saying, 'Let thy mind be devoted to Krishṇa... Chant always the name of Krishṇa."[36] Some scholars hold that the king's acceptance of Vaishṇava faith had a bad effect. He neglected the state affiars, the administration became weak and and the country fell a prey to Muslim invasion.

The Medieval school of Vaishṇavism in Orissa regarded Rādhā as a Jīva and Krishṇa as Paramātman. "The Lord entered within the womb of His own Śakti, Yogamāya and was born as the twins Rādhā and Krishṇa."

The Rādhā-idea became widely popular in Orissa greatly because of Chaitanya. Though the *Gīta-Govinda* was certainly known in Orissa before the Master came, still very few people, except Rāya Rāmānanda and Mādhavī Dāsī knew the mystic significance of Rādhā. Rāmānanda described the feelings of Rādhā in the *Jagannāthavallabha-nāṭaka* in a beautiful way.

Of all the modes of worship, in eastern part of India, the worship of Krishṇa through love became most popular with the Vaishṇavas during the 15th-16th century. *Madhura-rasa upāsanā* has two aspects; *Gopībhāva* and *Rādhābhāvā*. In both these modes of worship Krishṇa alone is the object of worship. As Rāya Rāmānanda explained to Mahāprabhu, "The Gopis share between themselves Krishṇa's passion as a lover." "But Rādhā is exclusively the consort-service. Rādhā cannot tolerate others' love of Krishṇa. It is the quintessance of love being the supreme emotion, of which Rādhā is the embodiment."

The 15th and 16th centuries saw in Orissa the rise of many poets who dwelt on the Vaishṇava themes. We have already mentioned the names of Rāya Rāmānanda and several others. Among the rest, to mention a few, Mārkaṇḍa composed the *Keśava Koili*, in which he has described the pangs of separation of Yaśodā when Krishṇa left for Mathura. Jagannātha Dāśa who flourished in the 16th century wrote a commentary on it. Sāralā Dāsa, who, according to some scholars, was a contemporary of Kapilendra is the famous author of the Oriya *Mahābhārata*. Equally well known is Balarāma Dāśa (16th century) for his Oriya *Rāmāyaṇa*. Jagannātha Dāsa, translated the *Bhāgavata* into Oriya. Yaśovanta was a worshipper of Jagannātha. In his *Prema-Bhakti Brahma-Gītā*, he makes Krishṇa expound the Yoga philosophy to Rādhā and Arjuna. Devadurlabha Dāsa describes the Rādhā-idea in his *Rahasyamañjarī*.[37]

One of the greatest scholars of Gauḍiya Vaishṇavism in Orissa was Baladeva Vidyābhūshaṇa (18th century). He was born in Remuna where the temple of Kshīrachorā Gopīnātha was situated. He studied the Vaishṇava philosophy carefully and wrote the *Govinda Bhāshya* on the *Brahma-sūtra* and *Daśopanishat*, explaining the *Achintya-bhedābheda*, i.e. the incomprehensible difference and non-difference on the image of Rādhā-Krishṇa. His theories were accepted by the southern Vaishṇavas who opposed the worship of Rādhā-Krishṇa.

"The followers of Mādhva philosophy adopted Nārāyaṇa as the supreme deity and they conceived three Śaktis, namely Śrī, Bhū and Līlā. Similarly, Baladeva Vidyābhūshaṇa conceived Krishṇa as God Himself (Krishṇastu Bhagavān svayam) and his three Śaktis or energies were namely Samvit, Sandhinī and Hlādinī and Rādhā was interpreted to be the Hlādinīśakti. Thus the deification of Rādhā was established on the basis of the Vedānta Philosophy... After the deification of Rādhā, the cult of Rādhā-Krishṇa spread like wild fire in the country and like Janmāshṭamī of Krishṇa, Rādhāshṭamī of Rādhā was introduced in the *Smriti* literature after the middle of the 18th century." (P. K. Acharya, *Souvenir on Jayadeva*, 1968, pp. 66 and 67).

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The Orissan artists perpetuated the Rādhā-Krishṇa theme in their artistic creations. Their treatment of the theme in stone, wood, ivory, metal and on paper has earned them wide reputation for their artistic excellence.

Many orissan artists illustrated the *Bhāgavata* manuscripts; these and many Orissan ivory and wood-carvings (16th-19th century) on the Krishṇa theme are now in different museums and libraries in India and abroad.

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ORISSA

1. "Sten Konow suggests that Siri-Kaḍāra is the same Prākrit expression as Siri-Katāra which means according to the *Sabdamālā* (*Vāchaspatyam*) a nāgara or kāmin. From this he is led to think that Siri-Kaḍāra is the lover of Śrī, viz. God Krishṇa and that Khāravela's boyish games were compared with Krishṇa's pranks and sports in Vrindavana. Jayaswal, accepting the above, renders Śrī Kaḍāra as the lover of Śrī, viz. God Vishṇu. Probably that is why Dr. Barua says that Khāravela as a prince 'had the very best bodily forms glowing with graceful majesty, so lovely as to captivate the heart of grace herself-the veritable god Vishṇu in human form", Amarchand Mittal, *Early History of Orissa*, Banaras, 1962, p. 300. Please see also B. M. Barua, *old Brāhmi Inscriptions*, Calcutta, 1929, p. 40.
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11. Information form Dr. K. S. Behera, Cuttack.
12. Pleare see fig. 76 of the Monochrome Plates.
13. K. S. Behera, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
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15. K. S. Behera, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
16. A. P. Sah, *Life in Medieval Orissa* (c. 600—1200), Varanasi, p. 184.
17. P. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 ff; A. P. Sah, *op. cit.*, pp. 184 ff; K. S. Behera, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 ff.
18. The correct position is that Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga was no doubt the builder of the Jagannātha temple, but as Anaṅgabhima III constructed a temple of the same name at Varanasi Kataka, this confusion has arisen, A. P. Sah, *op. cit.*, p. 185. The Vaishṇava pantheon in the Jagannātha temple includes besides the figures of Jaganātha, Balarāma and Subhadrā, the Kāliyamardana scene, Nārāyaṇa on Garuḍa, Narasimha, Harihara, Vāmana, Krishṇa, Hanumān, etc.
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30. K. S. Behera, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
31. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 180 ff, S. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 137.
32. P. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 and 43.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-48.
34. P. Mukherjee, *The Gajapati Kings of Orissa*, Calcutta, 1953, p. 163.
35. P. Mukherjee, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 125.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
37. P. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 73 ff; *The Gajapati Kings of Orissa*, Calcutta, 1953, pp. 139-145.

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CENTRAL & SOUTH INDIA

MADHYA PRADESH

MADHYA Bharat, as the archaeological evidence shows, was one of the most ancient centres of Krishṇa-Vāsudeva cult. As is well known, the bulk of the early Bhāgavata inscriptions and monuments of India come from Vidiśā or Malwa region. The most important Bhāgavata record to mention in this connection is the inscribed Garuḍa column erected at Besnagar in the second century B. C. in honour of Vāsudeva, by Heliodoros, a Greek Ambassador, to the court of the Śuṅga king, Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra. The inscription is divided into two parts. Part I states: 'This Garuḍa-column of Vāsudeva erected here by Heliodoros, a worshipper of Vishṇu (Bhāgavata), the son of Dion, and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as a Greek Ambassador from the Greek king Antialkidas to king Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra, the Saviour, then reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship."

Part II of the inscription refers to three important precepts (foot-steps), self-restraint, charity and conscientiousness, when practiced, these steps lead one to heaven (*Annual Report*, Archaelogical Survey of India, 9112-13, p.82, 1908-1909, p.126; D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, University of Calcutta. 1965, pp. 88 and 89).

It is worth quoting below the text of the inscription:

1. [De] vadevasa Vā[sude] vasa Garuḍa-dhvaje ayam
2. kārite i [a] Heliodoreṇa Bhāga-
3. vatena Diyasa putreṇa Takhkhasilākena
4. Yona-dūtena [ā] gatena mahārājasa
5. Amtalikitasa upa [m] tā sakāsam raño
6. Kā sīpu [tra] sa [Bhā] ga-bhadrasa trātā-rasa
7. vasena cha [tu] dasemna rājena vadhamā-nasa [II]
1. Triṇi amuta-padāni [ia] [su] anuṭhitāni
2. neyamti [khagam] dama chāga apramāda [II]

This proves beyond doubt that Heliodoros was an ardent follower of the Bhāgavata cult. Further, his adoption of the Bhāgavata religion shows that it was in vogue in the Punjab and the North West Frontier from some time before, because a religious cult or doctrine must necessarily be well established on the native soil before it can attract the notice of the foreign settlers.

The Heliodoros Pillar Inscription expresses here the essence of the Bhāgavata religion based on the ancient texts of India. In this connection, it may be significant to refer to the parallel ideas as contained in the *Mahābhārata.*

> damastyāgo pramādaścha eteshvamrita-māhitam tāni satya-mukhānyāhur Brāh-maṇā ye manīshiṇaḥ 5/43/22. damastyāgo pramādaścha te trayo Brahmaṇo hayāḥ, śīlaraśmi-samāyuktaḥ sthito yo mānase rathe, tyaktvā mrityubhay am rājan Brah-malokam sa gachchhati. abhayam sarva-bhūtebhyo yo dadāti mahīpate sa gach-chhati param sthānam Vishṇoḥpadamanā-mayam 1.17/23-25. (K. G. Goswami, *A Study of Vaishṇavism*, Calcutta, 1956, p. 6).

The Garuḍa pillar at Besnagar points to the existence of a Vishṇu temple near the site. The excavations carried out by M. D. Khare during the years 1963-65 in the area adjacent to the Garuḍa Pillar have brought to light the remains of the temple. The excavations have shown that the temple was elliptical on plan (*Lalit Kala*, No. 13, pp. 21-27).

Earlier, Bhandarkar laid a trench against the pillar with a view to bringing to light the temple of Vāsudeva mentioned in the dedicatory inscription on the pillar. But though he discovered railings on the periphery of the mound, he could not trace the plan of the actual temple.Bhandarkar dated the railings as belonging to the Śuṅga period.

Bhandarkar has drawn our attention to a fragment of another Garuḍa column preserved in the Besnagar Museum. It contains a

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broken Brāhmī inscription which records that the column was erected for the Bhagavat by one Gautamīputra, who was a follower of Bhāgavatism during the twelfth regnal year of Mahārāja Bhāgavata, who according to Bhandarkar, was the Śuṅga king of the same name mentioned in the *Purāṇas*. If so, he was perhaps the last but one in the list of the Śuṅga family and belonged to 100 B.C.

Besides the two Garuḍa columns, Bhandarkar noticed remains of other Vaishṇavite evidence in Besnagar. They consist of a capital of a column and a makara, which might have originally surmounted the capitals. These were found lying a few yards of the Garuḍa column. Taken together, the capital of the column and the makara would constitute what is known as Makaradhvaja. In the epic and purāṇic literature, Pradyumna, son of Krishṇa, has been attributed the Makara symbol. He is one of the four *Vyūhas* of the Pāñcharātra or Bhāgavata cult. On the basis of these facts, it is reasonable to support that there stood at Besnagar a shrine of Pradyumna.

One of the railing pillars of the Bharhut Stūpa (the Main Stūpa does not exist now, but its railing pillars, as discovered by Cunningham are now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta) shows two Garuḍa standards, one carried by a female on horseback and the other by a horseman behind, apparently a royal personage mounted on an elephant carrying a relic casket in procession, probably for depositing it in the Stūpa under reference. As the inscription would indicate, the male figure was a royal personage, i.e. probably Revatīmitra. His Garuḍa standard would show that the Garuḍa standard was common both to the Vaishṇavas and the Buddhists.

Mallar (in Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh) has yielded the earliest sculpture of Vishṇu in stone. The image in question is a four-armed deity representing probably Harihara. The palaeography of the inscription in Brāhmī script engraved on the long shaft held by the deity as well as its style ascribe the sculpture to the 2nd century B.C. The concept of multi-armed Vishṇu images is thus an old one. (*Catalogue, Vaishṇava Gallery*, Birla Museum, Bhopal, by K. D. Bajpai and Mrs. Manjushri Rao, Introduction, p. 1).

The front two hands of the image are in *Añjali-mudrā* while the back two hands hold a *śaṅkha* and a *chakra*. There is a *gadā* in the form of a long shaft placed on the ground, which is held in position by the right arm. A sword hangs down from the left hip of the figure (M. Venkataramayya, *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, Vol. XXIX, Parts 1-4, pp. 35 — 40). There is a lot of controversy regarding the identification of the image. As Vishṇu images are not normally shown in *Añjali-mudrā*, Venkataramayya thinks that it represents Krishṇa as one of the Pañchavīras (*Ibid.*). It may, however be mentioned that Vishṇu is shown in *Añjali-mudrā* before the Liṅgodbhava Śiva. Hence it is quite possible that a Liṅgodbhava *mūrti* may be found at the site in future so also a figure of Brahmā (as both Vishṇu & Brahmā are usually shown paying obeisance to Liṅgodbhava Śiva).

Mention should be made here also of the Balarāma figure from Tumain (c. 1st century B. C.).

At Eran (about 50 miles north-east of Bhilsa in the Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh) is a group of temples, important for the study of Vaishṇavism. The Eran Stone Inscription of Samudragupta is inscribed on "a redsandstone squared block found a short distance to the west of the well known temple of the boar at which there is the inscription of Toramāṇa ... The original stone is now in the Imperial (Indian) Museum, Calcutta".

From the shape of the stone block, Cunningham inferred that it was attached to the temple having a huge figure of Vishṇu standing north of the Boar temple (Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* Vol. III, pp. 21 ff).

As regards the popularity of Vaishṇavism with the people at large in Madhya Pradesh the Udayagiri Cave inscription of the time of Chandragupta II (Gupta Era 82 = 401-02 A.D.) provides a welcome light. It records the gift by a Mahārāja of the Sanakānika family, who was a feudatory of the king Chandragupta II.

The inscription is on the upper part of a smoothed and counter-sunk panel about 2' 4½" broad by 1' 6" high, "over two figures,- one of a four-armed god Vishṇu, attended by his two wives, and one of a twelve-armed goddess, who must be some form of Lakshmī, the consort of Vishṇu" (Fleet, *op., cit.* pp. 21-23). Some scholars believe that the female figure may be that of Durgā or Yogamāyā in association with Vishṇu worship. The joint worship of Vishṇu and Durgā was in prevalence in different parts of Madhya Pradesh. As an evidence of this, mention may be made of the Gaṅgādhar Stone Inscription of Viśvavarman, the year 480 Vikrama (= A.D. 423), which has been described as partly belonging to the Vaishṇava and partly to the Sākta or Tantra form of religion, inasmuch as it records the setting up by a certain Mayūrāksha, a minister of Viśvavarman, a temple in honour of Vishṇu and a temple of the divine mothers (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 74, S. Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaishṇavism*, Delhi, 1967, pp. 197 ff.). The family of Mayūrāksha was devoted to Vishnu.

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The king of the Sanakānikas who issued the charter of the Udayagiri cave was the son of Vishṇudāsa and grandson of Chagalaga. The name Chagalaga seems to be of a foreign origin. It appears that the Sanakānikas, though originally foreigners, adopted Vaishṇavism as many other foreign rulers did.

Now attention may be drawn to the boar incarnation of Vishṇu in cave No. 5 of Udayagiri. "With his left foot he treads upon the head of a Nāga king. With his right tusk he raises the slender and tiny figure of Prithvī, the personified goddess of the earth from out of the waters of the ocean shown by the wavy lines in the background. The event here depicts the famous cosmic myth of the creation of order out of chaos by the god Vishṇu in this form of Varāha. In the background at the top on both sides are represented the Devas and Asuras and Asuras watching with interest this great cosmic event, on the left and right sides of the cave are portrayed the descent of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā from the heavens to the sea accompanied by heavenly dancers and musicians." (D. R. Patil, The *Cultural Heritage of Madhya Bharat*, Gwalior, 1952, p. 101).

Among the other Udayagiri caves the important ones are Nos. 6 and 7 which contain some very important inscriptions of the Guptas and No. 13 with the rock-cut image of Śeshaśāyī-Vishṇu.

Quite a large number of inscriptions have been found at Mandasor, which throw considerable light on the history of Vaishṇavism in Madhya Pradesh. Mention may be made first of the Mandasor inscription of the time of Naravarman, A.D. 404. It opens with an invocation to lord Vishṇu, the thousand-headed Purusha, lying on the waters of the four oceans. It further states that when Naravarman was ruling, one Satya, considering the transitoriness of the world took refuge in Vāsudeva, unborn, immeasurable, all-pervading (who is compared to a tree), "which gives heaven as its noble fruit, whose charming celestial shoots are celestial damsels, whose many branches are the heavenly cars, which drop honey in the shape of rains from clouds" (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XII, pp. 315-21).

Though the Mandasor Stone Inscription of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, Malava years 493 and 529 is mainly concerned with the story of the construction of a sun temple at Dasapura by a guild of silk-weavers, it alludes also to Vishṇu as Śārṅgin as follows.

"As long as (the god) Īśa wears tawny matted locks, undulating with the spotless rays of the moon (on his forehead); and (as long as the god) Śārṅgin (carries) a garland of lovely water lilies on his shoulder; so long may the noble temple endure for ever!" (Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-87).

Among the other relevant inscriptions from Mandasor, mention may be made of one (c. 5th century) which begins with the formula 'Jitam bhagavatā' and describes Vishṇu as Chakrapāṇi, moving in chariot, i.e. Garuḍa (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXX, No. 22). The inscription was issued by Mahārāja Gauri, who was perhaps a feudatory chief of the king Ādityvarman of the Aulikara dynasty. Again the Mandasor stone Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman (532-33 A.D.) though beginning with the eulogy of Śiva, refers also to the boar incarnation of Sārṅgapāṇi (Fleet *op. cit.*, No. 33).

Reverting to Eran, we may mention here the pillar inscription dated 410-411 mentioning one Goparāja, son of Mādhava. Goparāja died in a battle perhaps against the Hūṇas for his overlord, Bhānugupta. The names, Goparāja and Mādhava show the Vaishṇava allegiance of the family (S. Jaiaswal, *op. cit.*, p.198). Recently a Gajalakshmī figure datable in the Gupta period was found at Eran (*ibid.*).

The Stone Pillar Inscription of the time of Budhagupta at Eran (year 165 = 484-85, Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 88 ff) is a Vaishṇava inscription, the object of which is to record the erection of a column called *dhvajastambha* or flag-staff of the god Vishṇu, under the name of Janār dana, by a Mahārāja, named Mātrivishṇu and his younger brother, Dhanyavishṇu.

The column on which the inscription is engraved has been associated by Cunningham with a temple, called Lakshmī temple.

The Eran Stone Pillar Inscription of Buddhagupta (484-85 A. D.) begins with an invocation to Vishṇu: "Victorious is the lord, the four-armed (god Vishṇu) whose couch is the broad waters of the four oceans, who is the cause of the continuance, the production and the destruction, etc. of the universe; (and) whose ensign is Garuḍa." (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 90). Mahārāja Mātrivishṇu was the son of Harivishṇu, grandson of Varuṇavishṇu and great grandson of Indravishṇu. This family seems to have been great adherents of Vishṇu for several generations as their names with suffix 'Vishṇu' would show. Mātrivishṇu has been described in the inscription as a great devotee of Vishṇu (atyanta-Bhagavadbhakta).

It will be interesting to refer here to Eran Stone Boar Inscription which is engraved 'on the chest of a colossal red sand-stone statue of a Boar, representing the god Vishṇu in his incarnation as such'.

The inscription refers itself to the reign of

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Toramāṇa (500-515) who occupied Malava shortly after Budhagupta. The object of the inscription is to record the building of the temple in which the boar stands, by Dhanyavishṇu, younger brother of the deceased Mātrivishṇu. It opens with an invocation to Vishṇu: "OM! Victorious is the god (Vishṇu) who has the form of a Boar, and who lifted up the earth (out of the waters) (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 159 ff).

Ascribable to this period are the standing figure of the Vishṇu and Nrisimha image from Besnagar and the Vishṇu image from Pawaya, housed in the Gwalior Museum, Gwalior (S. R. Thakore, *Catalogue of Sculptures*, pp. 4-6).

The Pawaya image is a two-faced one. It consists of two images standing back to back. While one represents Vishṇu, the other may Indra (S. K. Dikshit, *A Guide to the Central Archaeological Museum*, Gwalior, p. 15).

Like Udayagiri, Eran and Dasapura, Khoh in the former Nagod State of Central India was another important centre of Vaishṇavism during the 5th-6th centuries. It has yielded several inscriptions of the Uchchhakalpa kings, showing their allegiance to Vaishṇavism. The Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of the time of the Mahārājā Jayanātha of the Uchchhakalpa dynasty, year 177 (496-97) is a Vaishṇava inscription. It records the grant by the Mahārāja Jayanātha of the village of Dhavashaṇḍikā to some Brāhmaṇas for the purpose of a temple of the god Vishṇu, under the name of Bhagavat or the Divine one, established by them. (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 121).

The Khoh copper-plate Inscription, year 193 (512-13) issued by Māhāraja Sarvanātha of the Uchchhakalpa family is also of interest to us. 'It is partly Vaishṇava and partly of solar worship'. It records the grant by the Mahārāja Sarvanātha of the village of Āśramaka on the north bank of the river Tamasā, for the purposes, among other things, of a shrine of Vishṇu under the title of Bhagavat or the divine one, and of a shrine of the sun god (Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 125 and 126). The second copper-plate inscription of Mahārāja Sarvanātha (date lost) records the grant of half of the village of Dhavashaṇḍikā, for the purposes of a temple of Pishṭapurikādevī, which goddess is a form of Lakshmī, consort of Vishṇu. Again, the Khoh Copper-plate of the same ruler, year 214 (A.D. 533-34), records the sanction of the Mahārāja to the transfer among private grantees of two villages named Vyāghrapālikā and Kacharapāllikā in the Maṇināga-petha for the purposes of the goddess Pishṭapurikādevī at the town of Manapura (Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136).

Samskhoba, who was a Parivrājaka Mahārāja, and ruled over the Baghelkhand division of Central India (Uchchhakalpa kings held sway over this area) seems to have owed allegiance to Vaishṇavism. His Betul inscription, Gupta year 199 (518-519) opens with an invocation of Nārāyaṇa (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VIII, pp. 287 ff). Again, his Khoh copper-plate inscription, Year 209 (528-529) pays obeisance to Vishṇu under the name Vāsudeva. Further this inscription records the grant by Mahārāja Samskhobha of the village of Opani to a temple of the Goddess Pishṭapuri, a local form of Lakshmī (Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 112 ff).

Besides the above there is architectural and epigraphic evidence to show the popularity of Vaishṇavism in different parts of Madhya Pradesh during the Gupta period and subsequently. The Lakshmaṇa temple at Sirpur was constructed as a shrine of Hari by the mother of Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna. From its sculptural and architectural peculiarities, the temple has been dated by K. Deva to 600 (*Journal of the Madhya Pradesh Itihash Parishad*, No. 2, 1960, p. 360). The carvings on the sanctum doorway shows Vaishṇava incarnations, *Krishṇalīlā* scenes and Śeshaśāyī Vishṇu on the *Lalāṭa-bimba* (crest figure). As K. Deva has remarked, "the *Krishṇalīlā* scenes here appear to be similar to those represented on Bādāmi caves. The scenes of Krishṇa vanquishing Kāliya, Keśin and wrestlers are particularly alike and indicate the contemporaneity of the temple with the Bādāmi caves confirming a late sixth century date for both."

The Arang plate of the Rājā Mahā-Jayarāja describes the ruler as a Paramabhāgavata. Rājā Mahāsudevarāja and Pravara II were also followers of Vaishṇavism as the Raypur copper-plate inscription and the Mallar plates would respectively indicate (Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 192, 197 and *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 51 ff). Further the seals of the inscriptions of these kings, who belonged to Sarabhapura contain a standing figure of Lakshmī. These inscriptions written in box-headed script may belong to c. 5th-6th century A.D.

Mahāpravararāja (6th century) is described as a paramavaishṇava in the copper-plates from Thakurdiya (Chattisgarh district). Further a seal, showing Gajalakshmī is attached to it (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXII, pp. 22 ff).

Again, Tivaradeva has been described in his copper-plates from Rajim as a parama-Vaishṇava (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 298). Palaeographically, the Rajim plates can be ascribed to c. 7th-8th century. The Andhabhara plates of Mahā-Nannarāja describe the ruler (i.e. Mahā-Nannarāja) as an ardent worshipper of Vishṇu. The object of this inscription is to record the grant of a village to a Bhāgavata

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Brāhmaṇa, named, Nārāyaṇo-pādhyāya by the illustrious Mahā-Nannarājā, son of Mahāśiva-Tivara rājā (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 218 ff).

King Vilāsatuṅga of the Nala dynasty (c. 8th century A.D.) as his Rajim Stone Inscription would indicate, was devoted to Vaishṇavism. As this inscription states, he constructed a temple in honour of Vishṇu, under the name of Rājīvalochana. The inscription, as might be expected, opens with an invocation of Vishṇu. The verse, No. 4, is in the form of a dialogue between Vishṇu and Lakshmī, while the verse, No. 5, describes the Vāmana Avatāra (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 49ff).

There is a large image of Yaśodā nursing Krishṇa, housed in the Gwalior Museum, Gwalior. It comes from the Gadarmal temple, Badoh (c. 9th century). To this period may be placed the Nri-varāha and Hari-varāha images from Varakhedi, Raisen district and Nrisimha image from Narasingpur, Shadol district (Bajpai and Manjushri Rao *op. cit.*, pp. 1-3). In Badoh there are shrines, dedicated to one or another of the ten incarnations of Vishṇu. There is also a Dasāvatāra temple which once contained all the ten incarnations. The Dharmanātha temple at Dhamnar has a Vishṇu image with the *gadā*, *saṅkha* and *chakra* as attributes. All these temples range in date from the 8th to 10th century. The monolithic pillar inscription of V.S. 917 (A.D. 961) from Pathari refers to the construction of a Vaishṇava temple under the names of Murāri, Krishṇa and Hari by Parabala, King of Rāshṭrakūṭa dynasty (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IX, p. 248).

Again, there are two inscriptions at Gwalior (9th century) speaking of four donations to two temples, which had been built by Alla, son of Vaillabhaṭṭa and one of these temples was a Vishṇu temple (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 157).

The Gwalior Prasasti of Bhoja (9th century) records the erection of a house in his seraglio by the king in honour of Vishṇu. The inscription begins with an invocation to that god.

Vaishaṇvism flourished in Madhya Pradesh also during the Paramāra period. Garuḍa, Vishṇu's vehicle was the State emblem of the Paramāras, though most of them were devoted to Śaivism. Again, Siyaka II was a devotee of Vishṇu. His Harsola copper-plate begins with an invocation of Narasimha Avatāra. The inscription of Vākapati II, son of Siyka II, is significant inasmuch as it pays homage to Rādhā-virahātura-murāri, i.e. Krishṇa (*Indian Antiquary*, XIV, p. 160). Naravarman

Illustration to the Bihārī Satsaī : Rādhā and Krishṇa in a grove, Mewar, c. 1750, National Museum, New Delhi.

adopted the title of Nirvāṇa Nārāyaṇa as the protector of the subjects as Vishṇu is of the whole world. His Nagpur Praśasti pays homage to Vishṇu as Trivikrama, etc, (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, p. 182, v. 2).

King Arjunavarman paid homage in his land grant to Śesha, Paraśurāma, Rāmā and also to Krishṇa as a conqueror of Kamsa, (K. C. Jain, *Malwa though the Ages*, p. 416).

King Subhaṭavarman made a gift of two gardens (vāṭikā) for a temple of Vishṇu (*Epigraphia Indica* Vol. IX p. 109). King Jaitugi calls him young Nārāyaṇa (*ibid.*, p. 121) and Jayasimha Jayavarman pays homage to Parasurāma, Rāma and Kaiaṭbhajit (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 148 and 149). There is epigraphic reference to the existence of the temple of Daityasūdana (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IX, p.109).

As to the popularity of Vaishṇavism among the masses we may refer to an inscription (c. 10th century) from Maihar, in Satna district, Madhya Pradesh. It refers to one banker, named Madhusūdana, who was a great devotee of the god Madhusūdana. He was a friend of Dāmodara's father, Devadhara. The verse 47 says how Devadhara left his home and went to the abode of Vishṇu (i.e. died). This may mean that Devadhara went to a holy spot with a view to giving up his life (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol., XXXV, pp. 173 ff).

Vaishṇavism seems to have been in a flourishing condition in Madhya Pradesh also during the subsequent centuries as is evident from a large number of Vaishṇavite images and shrines constructed during this time.

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Some of the important Vaishṇavite images of this period found in various parts of Madhya Pradesh are housed in different Museums there, especially in the Gwalior Museum, Gwalior, Khajuraho Museum, Khajuraho, the Raipur Museum, Raipur, Central Museum, Indore, and the Birla Museum, Bhopal, etc. (Bajpai and Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 ff and S.R. Thakore, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 ff). Among the extant important shrines of the period mention may be made of the Sas-Bahu temple in Gwalior, a small Vishṇu temple nearby, the Hindola Toraṇa at Gyaraspur, etc. The construction of the Sas Bahu temple started sometime before 1093 A.D. and it was completed by the Kachhawaha Rajput prince Mahīpāla of Gwalior. The sanctum contained an image of Vishṇu which had disappeared long ago (Patil, *op. cit.*, p. 75).

There are many Vaishṇavite panels on the Lakshmaṇa temple, Khajuraho, representing scenes from Krishṇa's early life. They include the killing of Pūtanā, the upturning of the wagon (Śakaṭāsura came in the form of a wagon), the release of Yamalārjuna, the killing of the demons called Triṇāvarta, Vatasāsura, Arishṭa, Kuvalayāpīḍa and other scenes, such as the subjugation of Nāga Kāliya, Kubjānugraha (the favour shown to Kubjā), fight with Chāṇūr, Balarāma killing Lomaharshaṇa etc. (*Lalit Kala*, No. 8, pp. 82 ff). There is a representation of the Yamalārjuna scene on a panel in the Pārśvanātha temple as well as in the Viśvanātha temple in Khajuraho.

In the Archaeological Museum, Khajuraho, there is a relief, showing mother and child, which has been identified by some scholars as the birth of Krishṇa. The said Museum has also a frieze showing the churning of curd and other scenes relating to Krishṇa's life.

Urmila Agrawala observes that in the Khajuraho Museum there is a panel which shows Vasudeva and Devakī in the prison. Devakī looks sad. A little ahead, Vasudeva hands over the baby Krishṇa to Yaśodā. The artist has ignored the Purāṇic tradition that Yaśodā was not aware of the fact that Vasudeva placed Krishṇa by her side and took away her newly born daughter, Yogamāyā. (Urmila Agrawala, *Khajuraho, Sculptures anp their Significance*, fig. 15; B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 68).

The earliest sculptural representation of the Rāsamaṇḍala (which has been described in the *Harivamśa*, *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata*, *Brahma Purāṇa* and *Padma Purāṇa*, is according to Urmila Agrawala to be found in a Khajuraho panel in the Khajuraho Museum (Urmila Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 39). Further, according to her in the right inner Pradakshiṇa of the Lakshmaṇa temple Krishṇa is shown playing on the flute with his lady love at his side. She must be Rādhā as both the figures wear kirīṭa-mukuṭa (Urmila Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 39; B. B. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 and 78).

A very important inscription which throws interesting light on the history of Vaishṇavism in the Chandella region is the Khajuraho stone inscription of Yaśovarman. Dated in the Vikrama era 1011 (953-954), it records the erection of a temple of Vishṇu under the name of Vaikuṇṭha by the prince Yaśovarman, also called Lakshavarman of the Chandella family. It opens with an invocation of Vāsudeva. The verse refers to Vaikuṇṭha, as one who frightened the whole world with his roaring as a boon and also slew the three chief Asuras, Kapila and others (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. 1, pp. 122 ff).

There is a lot of epigraphic, sculptural and other evidence to show the continuity of the religion in the State in the subsequent centuries. On a temple pillar in Gurh 13 miles away from Rewa occur a number of episodes of Krishṇa's early life, namely Vasudeva taking Krishṇa out of the prison, Krishṇa killing Pūtanā, Yaśodā churning curd and suckling Krishṇa, Krishṇa fighting Kuvalayāpīḍa, Krishṇa and Balarāma equipped with weapons ready to fight and Gopīs talking about Krishṇa. Again, a pillar in a rebuilt temple from Marai near Satna shows Krishṇa killing Pūtanā, Yaśodā churning curd, Gopīs selling butter, Krishṇa playing by the side of his foster father, Nanda, Krishṇa feeding cows, Krishṇa upholding Govardhana, killing Kamsa, etc. Stylistically these pillars from Gurh and Marai belong to the 11th-12th century A.D. (Niraj jain, *Dharmayuga*, 22nd July, 1965, p. 45). Ascribable to this period also are *Krishṇalīlā* scenes from Sohagpur (R. D. Banerji, *The Haihayas of Tripuri and their Monuments*, p. 101).

At Hinglajgarh, Mandasore district, have been discovered a large number of Vaishṇavite and Śaivite images (10th-11th century). The Vaishṇavite images include Vāmana, Varāha, and Narsimha avatāras as well as Vaikuṇṭha-mūrti Vishṇu and Vishṇu as Yoga-Nārāyaṇa. There is also a panel showing the birth of Krishṇa. These pieces are now preserved in the Central Museum, Indore.

The Paramāras were all Śaivas as their copper-plates would show. But all their plates have Garuḍa seals. Again, the coin of Naravarman has the Gaja-lakshmī motif as that of the coins of Gāṅgeyadeva of Kalachurīs.

A Pratihāra grant from Kuretha in the Sivapuri district in Madhya Pradesh dated V.S. 1304 = A.D., 1248 begins with a salutation to the god Vāsudeva, i.e. Vishṇu (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXX, pp. 150 ff). In the Dhar Praśasti of Arjunavarman (*Pārijāta-*

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mañjari-Nāṭikā by Madana) the king is represented as an incarnation of Bhoja. In verse 3 of the Praśasti, Bhojadeva himself is compared to the god Krishṇa and to the epic hero Arjuna. Arjunavarman was the son of Subhaṭa, the Paramara king. Arjunavarman seems to have ruled during the early part of 13th century, i.e. about 1223 A.D. The author of the Pārijātamañjarī is Rājaguru Madana (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VIII, p. 96 ff).

The Ajayagadh Stone Inscription of Nana, V.S. 1345 (1289-90) records the construction of a temple at Jayadurga with the image of Keśava. The inscription opens with a salutation to Murāri followed by descriptions of the incarnations of Vishṇu in the form of Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Nrisimha, Vāmana, Parasurāma and Rāma. The ancestors of Nana were the hereditary ministers of the Chandratreya kings (i.e. the Chandellas). The verses 1-7 of the inscription describe Vishṇu as follows.

"May Deva (Vishṇu), the preserver, the enemy of the sons of Diti (Asuras), afford you joy, who generally does not feel physical weariness, being in the constant happy embrace of the bold Lakshmī and who signified amazingly consummate love (for the consort) with his restless rolling eyes intoxicated with delight, and whose Śrīvatsa (breast-jewel) shines like the Cupid's arrows shot by the expanded bow of its blazing rays.

May Murāri (i.e. the enemy of Mura), of ardent beauty, bless you, who, while being looked upon by his herd of cows, held upon the tip of his hand the mount Govardhana like a lump of mustard cake, and whose wonderous lusture was enhanced by the love-stricken wives of the cowherds.

May Hari who is, as if in pleasant sport, thwarting in jest the diversions of the licentious deer with their consorts by an (array) of arrows whose beauty has been blunted by the stiff breasts of the milk-maids, enhance your knowledge.

May Deva, the fish-transformed husband of Śrī (Lakshmī), the restorer of the set of the Vedas buried in the ocean, the refulgent, the destroyer of the burdens of the world, and the slayer of Śaṅkhāsura, destroy your sins.

May the tortoise, who revelled in abstract in the watery ocean with its shores destroyed by the Samvarta (one of the seven clouds at the dissolution of the universe), the refuge of the world constant in refulgent beauty, prosper you.

May Mādhava, (in the form of a boar) who, by the mighty thrust of his long cruel tusks delivered the earth in the shape of a muddy lump of clay and who extended the fixed order of religion and duty; the abode of intelligence and the habitat of the universe, and who is everready to destroy the mental agonies, increase your blessing.

May Nrisimha, resplendent like the rays of thousand suns resting on the tip of the peaks of the Sumeru, and appearing with drawn nails for the destruction of the demon (Hiraṇyakaśipu), destroy your sins.

May Vāmana (dwarf) of matchless glory, bless you; who by the pretext of smashing the eye of Sukra denounced the very statesmanship of his enemies; who expanded himself proportionate to the arrogance and haughtiness of Balī.

Victorious be that renowned Parasurāma, of great intelligence, the abode of victory and fame, who placed the earth in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas after acquiring its governance and who made the wives of the enemies sad.

May Rāma, too, the slayer of demons, whose deeds of valour gladden the hearts of the magnanimous and serve as the protection of the body, save you from all miseries." (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 98-105).

At Kukdeswar, to the west of Rampur, two temples were discovered of which one is Jaina. Inside this temple, a large slab carved with bas-relief was found built in the inner wall of the Maṇḍapa. The bas-relief represents scenes from the life of Krishṇa of the medieval period.

The medieval rhetorical treatises in Sanskrit and Hindi have treated Krishṇa as an ideal hero and Rādhikā and Gopīs as ideal heroines. The reason perhaps is that Krishṇa as supreme God has unlimited power of enjoyment, whereas the power of enjoyment in the case of human beings is limited. It may be mentioned here that the earlier works on the Nāyaka-Nāyikā bheda such as the *Hita-taraṅgiṇi* of Kripārāma (composed in 1541) and the *Baravi Nāyikā-bheda* of Rahīm, while mentioning Krishṇa sometimes as hero were inspired by secular literary tradition of love. But a transformation came with the epoch-making works, such as the *Bhakti-rasāmṛita-sindhu* and *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi* of Rūpa Gosvāmī, which blended the secular tradition of the Nāyaka-Nāyikā-bheda and that of the powerful Paurāṇik and literary works dealing with Gopīs. The other works such as the *Sāhityalaharī of* Sūradāsa, *Rasamañjarī* of Nandadāsa and *Rasikapriyā* of Keśavadāsa seem to have been inspired by Rūpa Gosvāmī's example. According to Vallabha and Chaitanya, the highest Rasa (flavour) is the Mādhurya, i.e. the parakīyā love (the love of Gopīs for Krishṇa). Vallabha and Chaitanya approved the setting of

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Krishṇa's love dalliances with the Gopīs in the Nāyaka-Nāyikā Bheda. This elevated love in a higher plane.

Since we are concerned here with the history of Krishṇa-Vishṇu cult in Madhya Pradesh, our main interest is Keśavadāsa. He was the court poet of Rājā Madhukar Shah of Orchha. Besides the *Rasikapriyā*, he wrote also the *Vijñāna-Gītā* and the *Kavipriyā*. His famous work *Rasikapriyā* was composed perhaps in 1591. As in the *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi* and *Sāhityalaharī* the Nāyaka and Nāyikā in Keśavadāsa's *Rasikapriyā* are Rādhā and Krishṇa as ideal lovers, and the situations described show the relationship of the soul and God (M. S. Randhawa, *Kangra Paintings on Love*, New Delhi, 1962, p. 28).

In the Vaishṇava literature the Rādhā-bhāva has been held in the highest esteem. Rādhā's love of Krishṇa was the most ideal form of Bhakti. This is known as the *Mahābhāva* of which Chaitanya was a great follower.

Another great poet who was born in Madhya Pradesh and who also described the Nāyikās was Bihārī. His only but one of the most famous works in Hindi literature is the *Bihāri-Satsaī*. This work begins with a prayer to Rādhā for removal of all the worldly obstacles of the author.

Merī bhava-bādhā harau, Rādhā nāgari soi
Jātana kī jhñain parai Syāmu harita-duti hoi

His deep devotion to Krishṇa is evident in many verses of the book. For example, the verse 4 says: Let in my heart remain present the sportive aspect of Krishṇa endowed with a crown in his head, a yellow robe in his waist, a flute in his hand and a *vanamālā* round his neck.

"Bihārī, who can be well regarded as the representative poet of the Rītikāla, for he has captured the imagination of his age, has expressed his sentiments of Bhakti in a number of couplets. In one of them he asks himself to love none but Manomohana, to see none but Ghanashyāma to sport with none but Kuñja-bihārī and to keep in heart none but Giridhārī. Elsewhere he reproaches Krishṇa, sharply yet sweetly for forgetting his habit of being pleased even at little merit and for adopting the ways of the donors of today. In another couplet flinging a challenge on his power of delivering from sins he tells him, "You are a saviour of the sinners, but I am bent upon defeating you by excelling in sins. Let us see, 'O Lord of the Yadus, who comes out victorious'. This challenge is in reality an expression of the poet's unshakable confidence in the power of the lord. The poet believes only in the fine love of the heart and not in ostentatious display of it. God, according to him, is pleased with those who are his sincere devotees. Such *Dohās* of Bihārī compare favourably with the writings of Sūra and Tulsī both in the depth of feeling and in the sincerity of purpose. (Rakesagupta, *Studies in Nāyaka-Nāyikā-Bheda*, Aligarh, 1967, pp. 294 and 295).

Bihari was born in Gwalior in Samvat 1652 (A.D.1595). He spent his childhood in Bundelkhand and then came to Vraja. Some scholars say that Bihārī's father was Keśavadāsa, who was a Sanāḍhya Brāhmaṇa. According to Grierson, Bihārī was born in a 'Chaube' (Chaturvedī) family of Mathura. It is said that Bihārī came to the place of Svāmī Naraharidāsa whom Jahangir and Shah Jahan came to visit. Narahari described Bihārī's poetic gifts to Shahjahan who invited him to the Mughal Court. Thus Bihārī's fame as a poet spread far and wide. While in Mughal court Bihārī came into personal contact with Rahīm who was a great poet, also known for his generosity. Rahīm, pleased with his poetry, conferred much wealth on him. Many Rājās followed the suit.

Bihārī also visited Jodhpur when Jasavant Singh was its ruler. The latter was greatly satisfied with Bihārī's one couplet:

nahin parāga nahin madhura madhu,
nahin vikāsa ihin kāla /
alī kalī hī saun bandhyau āgen kaun havāl //

and he asked him to settle in Jodhpur. It is said that Bihārī started his famous work 'Bihārī-Satsaī' in Jodhpur under the patronage of Rājā Jasavant Singh (Devendra Sarma 'Indra', *Bihārī-Satsaī*, Agra, pp. 1-15).

With the decline of the sculptural art during the Muslim period, the popularity of Krishṇa theme was perpetuated through miniature paintings in Madhya Pradesh as in other parts of the country. The Malwa painters, as is well known, delineated among other subjects, the *Krishṇa-lilā* scenes extensively, pertaining to the *Bhāgavata*. These paintings fall broadly to two classes, the early group belonging to the 17th century and the latter (mostly of the horizontal form) to the 18th century. The paintings of the earlier group show more vigour and action as in the scenes showing the killing of demons by Krishṇa and Balarāma.

The Krishṇa cult is alive here even today with the same vigour as before. Certain palaces of Madhya Pradesh contain wall paintings with Rādhā-Krishṇa and other scenes from Krishṇa's life, for example, the Rāmajānakī Mandir of Ujjayinī and the Indore Palace, both ascribable to the 18th century (Maratha period).

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ANDHRA PRADESH

THE Bhāgavata worship became popular in Andhra Pradesh as early as the time of the Sātavāhanas (second century A.D.). As an evidence in support of it, attention may be drawn to the Chinna Praśasti from the Krishna district of the Andhra Pradesh, dated in the twentyseventh year of Gautamīputra Yajña-śrī (A.D. 174-203), which begins with an invocation of Bhagavat Vāsudeva (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. 1, pp. 95-96). An interesting Vaishṇavite stone plaque was recently discovered in Kondamottu in Andhra Pradesh. It depicts the Pañchavīras of the Vrishni clan, including Krishṇa, along with a seated figure of Narasimha. This seems tobe the earliest representation of the Narasimha Avatāra. On stylistic grounds, this plaque can be attributed to the second-third century (*Journal, Indian Society of Oriental Art*, New series, Vol II, pl. V, fig. 2). The discovery in Nāgarjunakoṇḍa of the remains of a brick temple and an inscribed limestone slab with a large slit for the insertion of a base of a wooden image shows the prevalence of Vaishṇavism in the State in the 3rd-4th century. The inscription on the slab refers to the consecration of Ashṭabhujasvāmin (eight-armed Vishṇu), made of wood, a material described in *Agamā* literature, suitable for making images (*Journal of the Madras University*, Vol. XXXII, p. 144). The Guṇapadeya copper-plate of the time of Pallava Skanda-varman refers to the gift of some field to the temple of the god Nārāyaṇa, established at Dalur by the village elder Kulika. The gift of the land in question was made by Chāru-devī, wife of the Yuvamahārāja Śrī Vijaya-Buddhavarman. The inscription is in Prakrit and ascribable to the 4th century (Dālūre Kūlimahātarakadevakulassa bhagavānnārāyaṇassa amham āyu - bala - vaddhanīyam katūna bhūmīnivattaṇā chatvāri 4 amhehim sampadattā (D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Calcutta University, 1965, pp. 467-469).

The Vilavatti grant of Pallava Simhavarman (5th century) opens with an adoration to Bhagavat, i.e. "Jitam bhagavatā" (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 301 ff). Again, the Omgodu grant of Simhavarman II begins with the same expression (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XV, pp. 254 ff).

As to the popularity of Vaishṇava traditions, during the period, it is significant to note that Vaishṇavite names were frequently adopted by the kings and the people irrespective, however, of their personal faith. Mention may be made in this connection of Vishṇugopa of Kāñchī and Ānandā King Dāmodara of the 5th century (The *Classical Age*, pp. 202-204).

Though most of the Śālaṅkāyana kings were devoted to Śaivism, Śrī-Vijaya-nandivarman is described in an inscription as a parama - bhāgavata: Svasti Vijaya - Veṅgī purād - bhagavat - Chchitraratha - svāmipādānudhyāto Bappa - bhaṭṭāraka - pādabhakta - parama - bhāgavataśśālaṅkāyāno mahārāja (o) Chaṇḍavarmanassūnurjyeshṭho mahārāja - śrī - Vijaya - nandi - varmā, etc. (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, p. 176).

Regarding the Krishṇa worship, the scenes from his life occur, so far as our present state of knowledge is concerned, for the first time in Vishṇukuṇḍin times (5th-6th century) in Andhra Pradesh. The pillars in the Mogalrājapuram caves contain not only such mythological scenes, as Varāha rescuing earth from the ocean, Narasimha killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, Trivikrama overcoming Balī, Liṅgodbhava baffling Vishṇu and Brahmā, but also such themes, as Krishṇa raising Mount Govardhana, and Gopīs carrying pots, etc. indicating the popularity of Krishṇa's childhood exploits side by side with worship of Vishṇu and Śiva. (C. Sivaramamurti, *Indian Sculpture*, p. 65). Krishṇa-lilā scenes occur also on the *Vedibandha* of the Svarga-Brahmā temple at Alampur of the time of Vinayāditya (7th century) (*Journal, Indian Society of Oriental Art*, New Series, Vol. V, p. 35).

Krishṇa worship was no doubt popular during the subsequent times though archaeological evidence in its support from the 7th-9th century is very meagre. The Chura grant of Pallava Vijaya Vishṇugopavarman (7th century) commences with salutation to the Bhagavat as in some other early Pallava copper-plates. (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 137 ff). Again, the Gadval plates of the Chalukya King Vikrāmaditya (674) opens with an invocation to Varāha-avātara (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. X, p. 102).

The inscription of Vijaya Kampa-Vikrama (9th century) records the building of a temple of Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu at Śoḷapuram. This temple was named Kanakavalli Vishṇu-griha after the village of Kanakavalli in which some land was granted (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VII, p. 192 ff).

Of the 10th century, however, we have a fine group of bronze from Chimakurti, showing Krishṇa with Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. This is now preserved in the Madras Government Museum, Madras. The bronze is typically in style of the Eastern Chalukyas. The Pārthasvāmī temple, Vijayavada, belongs also to the Eastern Chalukya times.

Though during the medieval period there are several temples, dedicated to Vishṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Narasimha, etc., there are a few

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dedicated specifically to Krishṇa. The temple at Ahobalam, also known as Singavel Kundram, in the Kurnool district is of Lord Narasimha. All the nine forms of the god, such as Prahlāda-varada or Lakshmī Narasimha, Guha Narasimha, Krodha Narasimha, Malola Narasimha, Jvālā Narasimha, and Pavana Narasimha, etc. are worshipped here.

The Ahobalam temple goes back at least to the days of Vikramāditya of Western Chalukya kings of Kalyāṇa (1076-1106). There are inscriptions to show that the king came here and worshipped the mūlavigraha of this temple. The Utsava-vigraha of the temple was established by Pratāparudra, the last and most powerful of the Kākatīya kings.

The sanctity of Ahobalam has been sung by the Āḷvārs who call this place Singavelakundram. The *Tiruvaimozhi* of Tirumangai Āḷvār contains ten verses in honour of Ahobalam (N. Ramesan, Temples and Legends of Andhra Pradesh, 1969, p. 29).

It is interesting to note that among the donees of the Pithapuram plates of Vīrachoda (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol, V, pp. 71 ff) a large number of names have Vaishṇavite appellations. For example, "Veṇṇa-Kūta is a modified form of Veṇṇeyakkūttam, i.e. Krishṇa who was fond of butter (veṇṇey), Karimākya (perhaps a mistake for Karimāṇikya, i.e. the the black gem, a Tamil surname for Krishṇa), Krishṇabhaṭṭa, Krishṇasahasra, Visṇubhaṭṭa, etc.

That Krishṇa-Vishṇu worship was very popular during the Kākatīya times is evident from the stone Pillar inscription at Manthani in the Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. The inscription engraved on the four sides of the pillar refers to the reign of the Kākatīya king Gaṇapati (1199 A.D.). The first side of the inscription begins with an obeisance to the god Mantra-kūṭa Gopījanavallabha (i.e. Krishṇa, the lord of the Gopīs worshipped in a temple at Mantrakūṭa, the the corrupt form of which, is the present Manthani): Śrī-Mamtra - Kūṭa-Gopī-janavallabhāya namaḥ (D. C. Sircar, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 63 ff). Gopī-janavallabha is mentioned also in a Gaya inscription (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol, XXXIII, pp. 103 ff).

The second side of the inscription begins with a verse speaking of the installation of a deity described as accompanied by Ramā (i.e. Lakshmī) and charming on account of the three bends of his body. The deity referred to is obviously Krishṇa.

1. (ma) dhuram tri-bhaṅgyā mahaḥ [prati].
2. [shṭh] āpya Ramā-sahāyam !

Lines 17-20 of the third side of the inscription say that the donee, Mañche-bhaṭṭopādhyāya founded a village and excavated a tank for the Brāhmaṇas of Mantrakūṭa and he established in the land under reference a deity called Keśava and another deity, probably Mahādeva. Further, he gave a garden in favour of the god Gopī-jana-vallabha of Mantrakūṭa (D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 63 ff).

The greatest Vaishṇavite pilgrimage of the south is Tirupati. There are differences of opinion regarding the identity of the main deity, which in all probability may be Harihara. The jaṭā on the Kirīṭa and the nāgābharaṇa on the right fore-arm remind us of Śiva, while the Mahā-Lakshmī on the right breast and other general features are the traits of Vishṇu. According to Rāmānjua the idol is of Vishṇu or Śrīnivāsa. To remove the doubt, when Rāmānuja prayed to the lord, the image took up emblems of *Śaṅkha* and *Chakra*. The great saint established in the temple an image of Śrī Rāma giving refuge to Vibhīshaṇa.

The date of the founding of the temple is not known. The earliest reference to it occurs in the poems of the famous Tamil poet, Māmūlanār of the Śangam period.

Twelve miles east of Śrīkākuḷam is the famous temple of Śrī-Kūrmam, dedicated to Lord Vishṇu. This temple is important inasmuch as it is the only one so far known of the Kūrma avatāra of Vishṇu. It is known for its architectural excellence and contains inscriptions throwing considerable light on the history of the Gaṅga Kings (N. Ramesan, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-154). The Śiva-Keśavasvāmī temple (c. 15th century) in Pushpagiri in Cuddapah district contains a beautiful panel showing Krishṇa teaching the *Gītā* to Arjuna.

As is well known, the Krishṇa cult received a great impetus during the rule of the Vijayanagar kings. Regarding the epigraphical evidence throwing light on the subject we may refer to the Mangalagiri inscription of Krishṇa-Rāya (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VI, pp. 108 ff). It records a grant by Sāluva Timma, who presented a solid temple, adorned with nine golden pinnacles and a beautiful large hall to the temple of Hari and gave also the village of Mangalasaila to the temple of Narasimha. As in Tamil Nadu, many temples in Andhra of this period show Krishṇa-līlā scenes. Among such temples mention may be made of the Chintala Venkaṭaramaṇa temple dedicated to Vishṇu in Tadapatri in Anantpur district, and the temple at Lepakshi, also in the same district.

The Chintala Venkaṭaramaṇa temple, which is said to have been built by Śrī Timma Naidu under the orders of the Vijayanagar kings, contains on the southern and western walls the representation of Avatāras and scenes from Krishṇa's life. (N. Ramesan, *op. cit.*, p. 49).

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The temple at Lepakshi, which was constructed about the middle of the 16th century, is a tribute to Vijayanagar art. Though it is a Śiva temple, it shows many avatāras and scenes connected with Krishṇa and the Pāṇḍavas. The paintings in the Mukhamaṇḍapa show Krishṇa as Vaṭapatraśāyī with beautiful eyes. In the Draupadī *Svayamvara* scene Krishṇa with a graceful appearance, and decorated with jewels and ornaments seems to be standing by the side of Arjuna, shooting the fish target with his bow and arrows. Krishṇa is shown perhaps also in the section of the painting where Pāṇḍavas receive Draupadī. He seems to be pouring a handful of auspicious grain over the head of Draupadī. On the back walls of the Śukanāsī is painted the story of Muchukunda. Kālayavana, an ally of Jarāsandha, pursued Krishṇa and came to the cave where Muchukunda was enjoying uninterrupted sleep as a result of the boon he received from the Devas. Mistaking him for Krishṇa, Kālayavana kicked him and as he woke up, he reduced Kālayavana to ashes. The paintings in the Raghunāthālaya depict the Avatāras: Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma and Rāma (A. Gopal Rao, *Lepakshi*, Hyderabad, 1970, p. 80 ff.)

There were many other Vaishṇava temples in Andhra of whom the Udayagiri temple in Nellore district was dedicated to Gopāla Krishṇa. Krishṇadeva-Rāya brought the image from Udayagiri and installed it in the Krishṇa temple at Hampi in 1513 A.D. This image is now preserved in the Government Museum, Madras. In Akiripalli in Krishṇā district is also a temple dedicated to Veṇugopālasvāmī. There are records to show that the Sobhanāchala-svāmī temple here received a grant from one Indipudi Nārāyaṇa Rao in 1626.

Now it may be stated that Nanniah (11th century) at the command of the Chālukya king Rāja-Rāja Narendra began the translation of the *Mahābhārata*, but he could not complete it. The work was continued by Tikkanna in the thirteenth century and completed by Errāpragada in the fourteenth century. These three poets are called Kavitraya, the Great three.

During the 15th century, there arose in Telugu country many scholars and devotees, showing allegiance to Krishṇa-cult. Errāpragada who was a court poet of Prolayavarmā of the Reddis of Koṇḍavīḍu translated a part of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivaṁśa* into Telugu. He dedicated the translation of the *Harivaṁśa* to his patron, Prolayavarma Reddi (14th-15th century). Nāchana Soma, a contemporary of Errāpragada translated the *Uttara-Harivaṁśa*.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* was also very popular in Andhra. Among the notable translators of this epic were Raṅganātha and Hullakki Bhāskara (13th century) (A history of Telugu Literature, Heritage of India Series, pp. 54-57).

Bammera Potana (15th century) who was agreat poet and devotee of Vishṇu translated the Bhāgavata into Telugu. Though an adaptation from the original Sanskrit *Bhāgavata*, it is an excellent composition, excelling, according to Telugu scholars, even the original in certain respects. It has exercised a great influence on the minds of the people. Its effective style and manner of presentation has an immediate appeal and rouses spontaneous devotion. Devotees memorizes *Gajendramoksha* and many other parts of this *Bhāgavata* and recite them as prayers. His verses in *Gajendra-moksha* show his passionate faith in the Lord.

Evvaniché janiñchu jagamevvani lopalanuṇḍu līnamai evvaniyandu ḍindu parameśvaruḍevvaḍu mūḍlakāraṇam bevvaḍanādimadhyalayuevvaḍu sarvamu dānayainavā ḍevvaḍu vāninātmabhavunīśvaru ne śaraṇambu veḍedan, *Gajendra-moksha* 57.

(From the *Āndhrabhāgavata*, *Skanda* 8)

I seek refuge of that Lord, through whom the world is born, in whom the world is enveloped and in whom it finally merges, who is the overlord of all, the primal cause, who has no origin, middle or end, who is himself the universal and who is his own origin.

Some portions of Potana's Bhāgavata seem to have been destroyed by worms. These portions were completed by Erchūri Simganna and Veligandala Nārayya (*Ibid.*, p. 65).

During the reign of Krishṇadeva-Rāya there flourished many poets who dealt with the Krishṇaiṭe theme. Of them, Nandi Timmanna wrote the *Pārijātaharaṇa*. and Tenali Rāma-Krishṇa, the *Pāṇḍuraṅga-māhātmya* (*Ibid.*, pp. 74 and 83).

Raghunātha Nāyaka (1600-1631) and his son Vijaya Rāghava Nāyaka were great patrons of Telugu literature. Chengalva Kalakavi, a contemporary of Vijaya Rāghava Nāyaka wrote the *Rājagopālavilāsam*, describing the amorous sports of Krishṇa with the Gopīs. The eight chief consorts of Krishṇa have been classified as eight nāyikās: Rukmiṇī as Svīyā, Bhadrā as Kalahantartiā, Lakshaṇā as Vāsakassajjā, Jāmbavatī as Vipralabdhā, Mitravindā as Khaṇḍitā, Sudantā as Virahotkaṇṭhitā, Kālindī as Proshitā and Satyabhāmā as Svādhīnapatikā (G. V. Sitapati, *History of Telugu Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, pp. 20 ff).

Another poem that also deserves mention is the *Rādhā-Krishṇa-vilāsa* in pure Telugu by Krishṇadāsa (1730).

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Before we end, we should refer to the life and activities of Vallabhāchārya who founded the Pushṭimārga. He comes of a Tailangana Brāhmaṇa family though he was born in north India in 1479 while his father was on pilgrimage. After having received his Sanskrit education he moved from place to place and is said to have defeated the Smārta scholar of the court of Krishṇadeva-Rāya of Vijayanagar (1509-1529).

He was a great devotee of Krishṇa. It is said that he had no human teacher, and he received his system direct from the Lord.

The philosophical thought he propounded is known as Suddhādvaita (pure monism). According to him, Bhakti is the only way to salvation. It is both a means and an end. Bhakti which is higher than knowledge is god's grace (*pushṭi* as Vallabha calls it).

Rādhā is an emanation of Krishṇa. He enjoys an eternal sport with Rādhā in Vrindavana.

TAMIL NADU

THE history of Vaishṇavism including the Krishṇa worship is of great antiquity in Tamil Nadu. The Śangam works which constitute the earliest extant Tamil literature, datable from the 2nd century to the 6th century throw considerable light on the subject.

The Śangam literature speaks of various gods and associates one with each geographical division of the country. While Seyon (Muruga) was the god of the hilly regions, Māyon (Krishṇa) was the deity of the Mullai or the forest region.[1]

Though various gods are mentioned in the Śangam works, a considerable number of verses extol Vishṇu as the chief deity. He has been described under various names, such as Mālor, Deivamāl, Māyon, and Nediyon. It may be interesting to note that these epithets apply also to Krishṇa in the Śangam literature tending to show that the identification of Krishṇa with Vishṇu was an accepted fact in Tamil Nadu during this time. [2]

Not only all the three forms of Vishṇu, i.e. *sthānaka*, *āsana* and *śayana*, are mentioned in Śangam literature, but Krishṇa and Balarāma both as gods and Vrishṇi heroes were also known during this period. In *Puram*, Krishṇa and Balarāma are described as Māyon and Valiyon.

Māyon is dark and Valiyon white. The former bears the discus and kite (Garuḍa) flag and the latter has the plough and palmyra in his hand. Again, Pradyumna as Kāmadeva is very often referred to as son of Krishṇa and brother of Sāmba. So far as Aniruddha is concerned, he finds mention in the *Paripāḍal* and *Silappadikāram* which represent a comparatively late stage of the Śangam literature.[3] These two works are perhaps ascribable to the 5th-6th century.

The *Paripāḍal*, among other things, refers to Vishṇu's Mohinī aspect for distribution of *amrita* among the devas and also his Virāṭa form as revealed to Arjuna.

Among Vishṇu's attributes, the *chakra* and *śaṅkha* are most common. His other adornments, such as the *vanamālā*, *Kaustubha*, and *Śrīvatsa* are also mentioned in the Śangam works. This shows that the concept of full-fledged Vishṇu was known in the south also during the early centuries of the Christian era. This is corroborated by the mention of Ashṭabhujasvāmī in a Nāgārjunakoṇḍa inscription of c. 3rd century.[4]

The exploits of Krishṇa, such as the upturning of the cart, the uprooting of Yamalārjuna, the holding of Mount Govardhana, the killing of Keśī, Kuvalayāpīḍa, the Mallas, and Kamsa and the destruction of the fort of Bāṇāsura, etc. find mention in various places in the Śangam literature.

The earlier Śangam literature mentions the Avatāras, like Vāmana, Trivikrama, Krishṇa and Balarāma, while the latter works, like the *Paripāḍal* and the *Silappadikāram* refer also to Varāha, Kūrma and Narasimha.

Krishṇa's dalliance with Pinnai or Nappinnai forms a favourite theme in the Śangam literature. His love for Pinnai has been quoted as an example of true love. "Because of Pinnai he became indifferent also to Śrī who resides in his chest."[5] She occupies the same position in the Śangam works and in the songs of the Āḷvārs as Rādhā in the literature of the north.

In *Kuravai* dance with Pinnai, Krishṇa is placed to her right and Balarāma to her left, in the circle formed by the Gopīs. Krishṇa is said to have performed ten dances. Krishṇa's association with dance formed the basis of the concept of Navanīta-Nartana-Krishṇa, shown beautifully in bronzes and

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sculptures. The Śangam works mention also Krishṇa's *Kuḍam* dance in the streets of Bāṇāsura's city when he went there to release Aniruddha and effect his marriage with Bāṇa's daughter, Ushā.[6]

The Śangam works mention the *Vyūhas* or emanations of Krishṇa as the supreme being. Again, the mention of Sāmba makes it clear that the cult of Pañchavīras was known to the people of Śangam times. That the cult of Pañchavīras was very popular in Pallava period is evident from the Pārthasārathi temple, Triplicane, Madras, and the Vishṇu temple (Nachchiyar Koil) near Kumbakonam. Both the temples have been praised by the Āḷvārs in their songs.[7]

The Śangam literature, in short, dwells on the various aspects of the Bhāgavata cult, i.e. Krishṇa as an incarnation of Vishṇu, Krishṇa's high status independent of Vishṇu, the concept of the *Vyūhas*, as well as *avatāras* and some of the important exploits of Krishṇa's life. Further, the Śangam works emphasise the pastoral aspect of Krishṇa's life and his love of Pinnai, his most favourite milk-maid.

Krishṇa story found extensive representation in sculptures during the Pallava period. The main episodes of his life depicted during this period were mostly the Govardhana-dhāraṇa, the Kāliyamardana, Krishṇa's *Kuḍam* dance, Krishṇa killing Bakāsura and other demons.

One of the finest representations of the Govardhana-līlā is in the Krishṇa-maṇḍapa in Mahābalipuram (7th—8th century A.D.). All the important details have been brought out in this huge 'fresco-in stone'. The cowherds and their family and their cattle are shown under the cover of Govardhana. Balarāma, the elder brother of Krishṇa, figures in the right half of the relief. He leans on an attendant across whose shoulders he places his left hand. On the opposite side of the relief stands Krishṇa holding aloft the mountain with his hand, while his right hand rests on the hip. The female figure near him is perhaps Nappinnai, beloved of Krishṇa. Her dress and pose are indicative of her position superior to that of the other women (C. Sivaramamurti, *A Guide to Mahābalipuram*, pp. 20-21).

From this relief as well as from the one in Pharpur it is clear that the idea of a Gopī being the most favourite of Krishṇa among all the Gopīs was well known. In South India this favourite Gopī was known as Nappinai and in the North she came to be known later as Rādhā.

The Govardhana-dhāraṇa scene occurs also in one of the niches in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple which was built by Nandivarman II (8th century A. D.) of Kāñchī, and also in one of the small vertical panels on the base of the Puṇḍarīkāksha Perumāl temple in Tiruveḷḷarai in Tiruchirappaḷḷi district. There is an inscription in the Svastika tank behind the temple recording the construction of the well in the 4th regnal year of the later Pallava King Dantivarman. Thus, the temple can be ascribed on this epigraphic ground to late 8th or early 9th century. Tirumangai Āḷvār has sung in praise of this temple. These last two panels are not so elaborate in treatment as the Mahābalipuram relief. While the early Pallava reliefs are full of details, the later Pallava and Chola panels show a summary treatment of the episodes (*Madras University Journal*, Vol. XLII, Nos. 1 & 2, *1970*, pp. 161 and 164).

Vogel has drawn attention to the representation of the Kāliyamardana scene in one of the panels on the middle tier of its roof in the monolithic Dharmarāja Ratha in Mahābalipuram. Krishṇa vanquishes the three-hooded Nāga holding its tail by his both hands. Here Krishṇa is not shown dancing on the Nāga's hood as is usual in the depiction of such scenes (*Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1910-11, p. 50).

Dr. Champakalakshmi (*Madras University Journal*, Vol. XLII, Nos. 1 &2, 1970, pp. 161ff) has noted that the Shore temple of Mahābalipuram also contains reliefs depicting episodes from Krishṇa's life, such as the Keśivadha and the Kāliyamardana. Unfortunately, the reliefs are so corroded that their satisfactory identification is difficult in the present state of their preservation.

Again, it is interesting to note here the Mahendravāḍī inscription of Guṇabhara, written in archaic Pallava script (c. 7th century). The epigraph states that Guṇabhara splitting the rock caused to be made on the bank of the *Mahendrataṭākā* (tank) in the great city of Mahendrapura a spacious temple of Murāri (Vishṇu), named *Mahendra-Vishṇugriha* (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, pp. 153 ff).

We may also mention here the Mandagapaṭṭu inscription of Vichitra Chitta (Pallava Mahendra-varman), who caused to be built a brickless and timberless mansion for the gods, Brahmā, Īśvara and Vishṇu, called Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVII, pp. 14 ff).

The other Vaishṇava panels on Pallava temples in Kāñchī (the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāl temple and the Kailāsanātha temple) include the Gajendramoksha and the Amritamanthana episodes.

The Pallava Puṇḍarīkāksha Perumāl temple in Tiruveḷḷarai in Tiruchirappali district,

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Bālalīlās, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tirupparuttikuṇram, Tamil Nadu, South India.

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belonging to the 8th—9th century, has on the bases of the *Vimāna* and in Svastika tank a series of sculptures showing Krishṇa scenes, such as *Kuḍam* dance, subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya, Keśivadha, besides the Govardhanadhāraṇa, as noted above.[8]

The *Kuḍam* dance of Krishṇa is a purely South Indian conception. Krishṇa is said to have performed this dance in the streets of "So" in Bāṇa's city when he went there to release his grandson Aniruddha from Bāṇa's captivity.

This dance is included among the eleven kinds of folk-dances performed in Tamil country from ancient times. The dancer dances placing several pots on his head, shoulders, and hands. The Āḻvārs refer very often to this dance of Krishṇa.[9]

The Tiruveḷḷarai panel shows Krishṇa as a youthful figure dancing with his legs in *chatura* pose and a pot on his left shoulder. This figure is remarkable for its delicacy of treatment. (*Madras University Journal*, Vol. XLII, 1970, Nos 1 & 2, p. 164).

Bakāsuravadha occurs on the base of the *Vimāna* of the Puṇḍarīkāksha temple and also on a panel in the Svastika tank. Both the panels show Krishṇa tearing up the bills of the asura who came in the form of a crane.[10] The first panel is a forceful representation of the theme.

The Kāliyamardana scene on one of the vertical panels of the *Vimāna* of the Puṇḍarīkāksha temple is also realistic and forceful, though its beauty has been greatly marred by the application of lime over it by a pious renovator. Krishṇa's left leg is placed on the hoods of the Nāga, while he presses it with his right leg and holds the tail of the nāga with both his hands. The delicate treatment of Krishṇa's body bespeaks of the artist's skill. There are two panels in the Svastika tank representing the Dhenuka and Keśīvadha (*R. Champakalakshmi, op. cit.*, p. 164).

The Atiya rulers seem to have been great patrons of Vaishṇavism, and they excavated two Cave-temples at Nāmakkal in the Salem district, both dedicated to Vishṇu and under worship today (Vidya Daheja, *The Nāmakkal Caves*, 1969, pp. 3ff). The Caves and their sculptures belong to c. 8th century. Among the sculptures which show a vigorous treatment, mention may be made of Vaikuṇṭha Nārāyaṇa, Bāla Narasimha, Varāha Avatāra, Vāmana Avatāra and Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa (Vidya Daheja, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-35).

The earliest temple in Tamil Nadu dedicated exclusively to Krishṇa cult is the Pārthasārathi temple in Triplicane. Herein is enshrined Krishṇa with his consort Rukmiṇī and his other associates, like Balarāma, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Śātyaki. All the figures are two-armed. They form a group of Vrishṇi heroes (normally Sāmba is mentioned in the place of Śātyaki in the *Purāṇas*) worshipped by people. The images are not easily datable, but the image of Krishṇa can be placed stylistically to the 8th—9th century. Further, there is epigraphic evidence associating the temple with the Pallava ruler of this time. Another temple of this type is the temple in Nachchiyār Koil, about 6 miles south east of Kumbakonam. It is difficult to ascertain with precision the date of the temple. Scholars, however, surmise it to be a construction of late Pallava or early Chola times (T. G. Aravamuthan, *Transactions of the Archaeological Society*, South India, 1962-65, pp. 63-67).

The Lord enshrined in Nachchiyār Koil is called Śrīnivāsa or Venkaṭeśa 'lauded by a saint in a hundred hymns that have gone into the Holy Canon of Tamil Vaishṇavism, a distinction that is not very common.' Four other images enshrined in the temple are Balarāma, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Śāmba, the Vrishṇi heroes. This group in the Triplicane temple substitutes Sātyaki in the place of Sāmba. (T. G. Aravamuthan, *op. cit.*, p. 68).

One more Pañchavīra temple known to Tamil country is the Vīra-Nārāyaṇa temple at Tirut-Tangal, just two miles from Sivaganga in the Ramanathapuram district. The Āḻvārs of the 9th century have sung in praise of it. Eleven images have been enshrined in the temple. The chief image is known as Vīra-Nārāyaṇa. He is accompanied by his four consorts, including Jāmbavatī. The other figures are Pradyumna, Garuḍa, Mārkaṇḍeya, Ushā, Aniruddha and Bhrigu (T. G. Aravamuthan, *op. cit.*, p. 75).

The popularity of Vaishṇavism in South India during the Pallava period is evident also from certain other Pallava antiquities including a stone *Kuḍu* showing Kāliyamardana from Kāveripākkam as well as from the literary sources as the *Avatīsundarī-kathā* and other works of Daṇḍin, who flourished in Kāñchī in the 8th-9th century. Daṇḍī has portrayed Vishṇu as a benevolent deity as opposed to Śiva who has also fierce traits. Vishṇu incarnates himself in different avatāras to uphold righteousness and destroy the evil. The avatāras of Vishṇu, popular in Daṇḍin's time, are Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, and Krishṇa. Krishṇa is the highest of all the avatāras (D. K. Gupta, Society and Culture in the time of Daṇḍin, Delhi, pp. 330 ff).

The popularity of Vaishṇavism during this time is attested also by the songs of the Āḻvārs most of whom flourished during the Pallava period. In other words, the Bhakti-

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movement and in its wake, the Krishṇa-cult received a great impetus in South India, during the 7th-9th centuries with the rise of the Āḷvārs, who preached Bhakti as the sole means to salvation. Their centre of devotion was God Vishṇu or his Avatāras, especially Rāma and Krishṇa. They contemplated on the attractive figure of Krishṇa and looked upon him as Saviour. God revealed himself in his grace in human form as Krishṇa or Rāma. The intensive devotion of the Āḷvārs to God (a parallel and contemporary Bhakti movement was of the Śaiva saints in South India) had created a great religious change in South India during the medieval period and it formed the main inspiration for Rāmānuja's philosophy. The *Bhagavadgītā* is the source of the Bhakti movement in India. In Āḷvārs the Nishkāma Bhakti of the *Gītā* found the highest expression. They carried forward the message of the *Gītā* among the masses in a simple way through songs and devotion. (J. S. M. Hooper, Hymns of the Āḷvārs, Calcutta, 1929, pp. 1-30).

As to the chronology of the Āḷvārs there is much uncertainty. The first three Āḷvārs, Poygaiāḷvār, Bhūtattāḷvar and Peyāḷvār seem to have flourished in the 7th century A.D.

Contemporary with them was also Tirumaliśai Āḷvār who was born three months later than the above three Āḷvārs in the village of Tirumaliśai near Poonamallee. He is said to have spent much time in Triplicane, Conjeevaram and Kumbakonam.

The next is Nammāḷavār, the greatest and most famous Āḷvār (9th century). He is known also by the names, Saṭhagopan, Parāṇkuśam, etc. His name is closely associated with his disciple Mathurakavi. His whole life was spent in meditation. He had a revelation of Vishṇu and came from his mouth spontaneous verses which are preserved in *Nālāyira Prabandham*. His works include the *Tiruviruttam* containing 100 stanzas, the *Tiruvāsiriam*, 7 stanzas, the *Periya* Tiruvandādi, 87 stanzas and the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, 1,102 stanzas, (Hooper, *op. cit.*. p. 13).

He flourished in the first half of the 9th century. His disciple was Mathurakavi who was very much devoted to him.

The next is Kulaśekhara Āḷvār who was a Chera king in Travancore. He was a great ruler (9th century) but he became disgusted with worldly affairs and his mind turned to religion. He abdicated his throne and visited the sacred shrines, including Śrīraṅgam. His stanzas are embodied in the Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi. He is the author of the *Mukundamālā* which is a devotional composition of great merit.

Periyāḷvār, known also as Vishṇu-Chittar, was born in a Brahmin family in Śrīvilliputtur. He was a man of piety and devotion and a great devotee of Krishṇa. He used to collect flowers every day to worship Krishṇa as Vaṭapatraśāyī.

He expounded the *Vedānta* in the court of the Pāṇḍyan King Vallabha-dèva and earned the title of 'Paṭṭar-Pirān'—the Brāhmaṇa-Chief. But on his return from there, he experienced a grear love for Vishṇu and at Śrīvillipputtur he composed the *Tirumoḷi* on the exploits of Krishṇa. He can be placed in the middle of the 9th century.

Aṇḍāl was the daughter of Periyāḷvār. She was not only a great devotee of Krishṇa but also a reputed poet. One day Periyāḷvār gathered flowers for Krishṇa-worship, but Aṇḍāl wore them which offended the religious sentiments of Periyāḷvār. In a vision, however, he was told that God liked that Aṇḍal wore the flowers. Henceforth, she used to wear flowers before they were offered to Krishṇa. "She became inflamed with passion for Krishṇa and pictured herself as one of the Gopīs seeking union with him by every means." (Hooper, *op. cit.*, p. 15). Her beautiful stanzas known as the *Tiruppāvai* and Nāchchiyar *Tirumoḷi* are very popular with the Vaishṇavas in the south. When the question of her marriage arose it was revealed that she was to be the bride of Raṅganātha, i.e. Vishṇu in recumbent form as shown in Śrīraṅgam. She came to Śrīraṅgam and was absorbed into the divine being.

Toṇḍaraḍīppoḍī was born at Maṇḍaṅguḍi. He came for some time under the influence of a courtesan called Devādevi. Through the grace of Raṅgnātha he was able to overcome this evil. He composed the hymns known as the *Tirumālai* and *Tiruppalli Yeluchi* (the rousing of the Lord).

Tiruppāṇ Āḷvār was found in a paddy field at Uraiyur (now Tiruchirappalli) and was brought up by a childless Pāṇār or a lute-player and his wife. He was devoted to Vishṇu as manifested at Śrīraṅgam. In his ecstatic emotion he composed the *Amalanādipirān* in verse in honour of the Lord and was finally absorbed into the divine at the age of fifty.

Tirumaṅgai was the last and most colourful of the Āḷvārs. He was given the name Nīla (blue) in honour of Vishṇu. He was offered the father's post and made a sub-king of the Tiruvāli country.He fell in love with a heavenly nymph, called Kumudavalli who was adopted by a Vaishṇava. She, however, refused to marry anyone who is not a Vaishṇava. Nīla immediately visited a shrine and prayed to God to make him a Vaishṇava. Immediately the

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twelve marks of Vishṇu, the wheel, the conch, etc. were imprinted on his person.

Tirumangai took to highway robbery to feed 1,008 Vaishṇavas. To help him Nārāyaṇa turned himself into a wealthy Brāhmaṇa and allowed him to be robbed. At the end, with the help of the Mantra which Nārāyaṇa gave him he had a vision of Vishṇu in the form of Hrishīkeśa. Inspired by this, he produced beautiful stanzas which are preserved in the *Prabandham-Periya Tirumoli*, *Tirukkuruṅ Tāṇḍaham*, *Tiruṇeḍuṅ-Tāṇḍaham*, *Tiruverukuṭrirukkai*, *Siriya Tirumaḍal*, and *Periyā Tirumaḍal* (Hooper, *op.*, *cit.* p. 17).

The songs of the Āḻvārs seem to have exercised a great influence in the society, and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* appears to have sprung from a community like the Āḻvārs. 'The kind of Bhakti described in the *Purāṇa* is precisely that of the Āḻvārs—a surging emotion produced by gazing on the images of Krishṇa, singing his praises, meditating on him,associating with other devotees, touching their bodies, serving them lovingly, talking with them of his wonderous doing and his graces." Nāthamuni (920) codified the *Nālāyiram*, which is one of the greatest classics of the Tamil country (Hooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 and 18).

The Āḻvārs have preached and composed their songs in vernaculars which had a direct appeal to the people. In this respect they have followed the ideals of the Buddhists and Jainas who could also come into direct contact with the people through their teachings and writings, mostly in the languages of the people But their religion, however, was extremely ethical and could not exercise the same influence as the emotional religion of the Āḻvārs.

During the Chola period (c. 10th—13th century) Śaivism became a dominant religion. But Vaishṇavism, however, continued in popularity in different parts of the state, though it did not receive any royal patronage as Śaivism did. Because of this, Vaishṇava temples and antiquities of this period are few compared to the Śaivite ones. Of the very few temples dedicated to Krishṇa during the Chola period, the temple at Mannarguḍi is one of the most important. Though the *mūlabera* here is Jagannātha, the *Utsavavigraha* is Krishṇa as Rājamannar. Apart from this, the scenes from Krishṇa's life have been depicted in different Śaivite temples of this period.

The Pūtanāvadha scene occurs on a panel of the Śiva temple at Punjai (K. A. N. Sastri, *The Choḷas*, pl. XXXV, fig. 99) 'This scene finds representation also on the Chola sculpture from Pullamangai. The Kuvalayāpīḍavadha episode is represented on several basreliefs of the Chola period, including those of the Nāgeśvaraśvāmī in Kumbakonam, the Śiva temple at Punjai, and the Devanāthasvāmī temple of Tiruvendipuram.[11] The artists in delineating the theme seem to have been inspired by the songs of the Āḻvārs.

The killing of the crane-demon and the demon Dhenuka occurs on two of the small panels on the base of the *vimāna* of the Nāgeśvarasvāmī temple. The same temple depicts also the scenes, Govardhanadhāraṇa, Kāliyamardana, Gajendramoksha and Krishṇa's stealing butter. Again, the *Vastraharaṇa* of the Gopīs is delineated in a panel of the Tiruvendipuram temple.

Some coins of Rājarāja (985-1012), the Chola Emperor, though an ardent devotee of Śiva, has the representation of Muralīdhara-Krishṇa. This may be the fore-runner of the same device on the coins of the Vijayanagar kings.

There is a modern Krishṇa temple in Kalambur. But the main image, enshrined there, is perhaps of the 9th century. Krishṇa as Vaṭapatraśāyī is shown on the wall of the Paśupati Koil (Chola), near Thañjavur.

The Chola artists produced some beautiful bronze figures of Kāḻiya-Krishṇa, Bāla-Krishṇa, Navanīta Krishṇa, Vaṭapatrśāayī Krishṇa, Santhānagopāla and Krishṇa with his consorts, Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. One of the finest of such images is the Kāliya-Krishṇa preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi. It has the grace and perfection of the Chola style (fig. 79).

All this would show the widespread popularity of the Krishṇa theme with the artists of the Chola period.

Now we may refer to certain epigraphic evidences regarding the prevalence of Krishṇa worship in Tamil Nadu. On a pillar in the rock-cut cave, Puṇḍarīkāksha Perumāl temple there is one inscription dated in the 8th year of Parakeśarī-varman (who may be identified with Uttama-Chola) recording a gift of 20 kaḻañju gold made by Irāyirvan Devī Ammanar, wife of the Lord...Rājāditya to provide for special offerings with *4 nails* of rice on Śaṅkrānti and Ashṭamī days to God Śrī Krishṇa and Goddess Śrī Rukimiṇī in the temple at Tiruveḻḻarai and another gift of gold for a lamp to be burnt on these days.[12] This is perhaps the earliest reference to the worship of Krishṇa and Rukmiṇī found so far in the South Indian inscriptions.

The Karhad plates of Krishṇa III of the Rāshṭrakūṭa family (which provides direct evidence of the occupation of the Chola country by the king Krishṇa) refer to the construction by him of the temples of Kālapriya, Gaṇḍamārtaṇḍa, Krishṇeśvara,

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and others. These plates were issued when Krishṇa III was encamping at Mèlapāḍi.[13]

According to V. Venkayya the Sundaravarada Perumāḷ temple also owes its origin to Krishṇa III when he was encamping at Melpāḍi.[14]

There are also other epigraphical references to the popularity of Krishna worship during the Chola period. An inscription ascribable to A. D. 922 from Erode says that the people of a whole Nāḍu paid some cesses for the worship of Krishṇa in a Vishṇu temple in the place.[15]

The rise of Rāmānuja is a landmark in the religious history of South India. He carried forward the mission of the Āḻvārs and the work of the Āchāryas called Nāthamuni and Yāmunāchārya.

Rāmānuja propounded the Viśishṭādvaita philosophy (qualified monism) and declared *bhakti* to be the basis of all religious life.

Rāmānuja received his training from a teacher of Śaṅkara School, Yādavaprakāśa but as he advocated qualified monism, differences arose between the teacher and the disciple. Rāmānuja left Yādavaprakāśa, and established his own school of thought.

On Yāmunāchārya's death he became the head of the Śrīraṅgam temple, where for twenty years he lectured and wrote books. His three well-known works are the *Vedāntasangraha*, the *Śrībhāshya*, and the *Gītābhāshya*. The *Śrībhāshya* is a valuable guide for the Śri-Vaishṇavas of whom Rāmānuja was the founder. Inspired by the ideals of the Āḻvārs he was eager to preach the doctrine of Bhakti to all, irrespective of caste or creed. To make his system known to his people he visited different parts of South India..

In A. D. 1098, Rāmānuja had to flee to Mysore because of the Vaishṇava persecution started by Kulottuṅga Chola. The crown-prince of the Hoysaḷa dynasty, though a Jaina, received him with all courtesy and was initiated into Vaishṇavism by him. The new name of the prince after conversion was Vishṇuvardhana (K. A. N. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 149).

On the death of Kulottuṅga in 1118, Rāmānuja came back to Śrīraṅgam in 1122. He died in 1137. He is worshipped as an incarnation by his followers.

Rāmānuja formed the Pāñcharātra doctrine of the *Vyūhas* and he regarded Vishṇu as the highest truth. In the system which he formulated he combined the Vedantic thought with Bhāgavata practices. According to Rāmānuja Īśvara is the highest *tattva*. He is the possessor of infinite knowledge and bliss. All who are free from bondage enjoy complete rapport with him.

The role of Lakshmī or Śrī is very important in Śrīvaishṇavaism. She is the mediator between human souls and almighty God. The role of Śrī as mother was postulated in response to popular demands and the motherly act of Lakshmī has added to the strength of this faith.

The two important Vaishṇava poets who flourished in Chola period are Kamban whose Rāmāyaṇa is famous and Tiruvarangattu Amudanār, the disciple of the disciple of Rāmānuja, whose poem of a hundred stanzas on Rāmānuja occupies a high place in the Vaishṇava literature. (K. A. N. Sastri, *A History of South India*, p. 370).

During the Vijayanagar period there was a cultural resurgence over the whole of the South, leading to the greater popularity of the Bhāgavata cult. Innumerable sculptures showing Krishṇa or scenes of his life came to be carved during this period.

In the *Kalyāṇamaṇḍapa* of Śrī Varadarājasvāmī temple, Kāñchī, there is a fine row of such sculptures, viz. child Krishṇa being tied to a stone-mortar, Krishṇa stealing the clothes of the girls of Vraja, killing Vakāsura, dancing on the hoods of the Nāga Kāliya, holding the mountain Govardhana, etc. The *Gopikā-vastraharaṇa* occurs also on the *Gopuram* of the Brihadīśvara temple, Thañjavur. This *Gopuram* is of the Vijayanagar period.

Śrīraṅgam, a huge temple with several prākāras, has been a very active centre of Vaishṇavism for long. It is the foremost of the 108 Śrī-Vaishṇava shrines of the south. All the Āḻvārs, except Mathurakavi, have frequently referred to this temple in their songs. Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi, Kulaśekhara and Tiruppān lived in Śrīraṅgam and their works, like *Tirumālai*, *Tiruppalli-Yeḻuchi* and *Amalanādipirān* are exclusively devoted to Raṅganātha.

The figures of Krishṇa and scenes from his life are depicted in various places in the Śrīraṅgam temple. To the west of the Raṅgavilāsamaṇḍapa occur in a row the Nāthamuni shrine, the inner Aṇḍāḷ shrine, and Veṇugopāla shrine. The chief stone image of the Nāthamuni shrine is Gopāla Krishṇa with two arms. He is shown in a *tribhaṅga* pose. The right hand holds a curved stick while the left is bent at the elbow. Nearby is shown Balarāma, and a brass image of Kāliya-Krishṇa (V. N. Hari Rao, *Śrīraṅgam Temple*, Tirupati, 1967, p. 89).

The most ornate structure of Śrīraṅgam

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temple complex is the Veṇugopāla shrine with the *garbhagriha*, *antarāla*, *pradakshiṇapatha*, *Mukhamaṇḍapa* and *Mahāmaṇḍapa*. Veṇugopāla is the *mūlavigraha* of the sanctum.

In the south-eastern corner of the Kilimaṇḍapa within the first *prākāra* is a small shrine having Navanīta-Krishṇa as the *mūlabera*. The child god has a butter ball in his right hand and is dancing in joy. Behind this is a stone image of Krishṇa holding a vessel in right hand and a *śaṅkha* in the left.

At the south-east corner of the fourth *prākāra* stands the Pārthasārathi shrine, with a stone image of two-armed Krishṇa as the *mūlabera*. He has a whip in the left hand while the right hand is in the gesture of teaching. To his right stands Arjuna with hands in *añjalimudrā*. In the south-west corner of the sanctum are the images of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. The *Utsava-vigrahas* are Krishṇa, Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā (V. N. Hari Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 89). The main figure in what is called the Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi Āḷvār shrine is of Ashṭabhuja Krishṇa.

The images and shrines of the Śrīraṅgam temple described above are mostly of Vijayanagar period, though the temple had its earlier origin. The present temple is the result of constructions of several successive periods.

An interesting evidence of the patronage of Vaishṇavism during the Pāṇḍya rule is the Raṅganātha inscription of Sundarapāṇḍya (13th century) in Śrīraṅgam. It states that the king built a shrine of Narasimha and another of Vishvaksena both of which were covered with gold (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. III, pp. 7 ff). Before we proceed, we may refer also to the Triplicane plates of Panta Mailara, dated Śaka 1350 (A. D. 1428). This inscription mentions Siṅgarāya as the donee of the grant who belonged to the Śrīśailavaṁśa. It further records that Peria Tirumalai-nambi (who was the maternal uncle of Rāmānuja) was an authority on the exposition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in which his descendants also became famous. The title of this family is Tātāchārya. It originated from the fact that the god Veṅkateśa of Tirupati was very pleased with Periya Tirumalai-nambi for the great care he took of his image at Tirumali and on one occasion the god is said to have addressed him as "mama tāta" (my father). Since then Periya Tirumalai Nambi came to be known as Tātāchārya. The Tātāchāryas were the gurus of the Vijayanagar kings (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIII, pp. 1 ff).

Krishṇa figures and scenes from his life occur profusely also in Śuchīndram temple. Śuchīndram, which belonged formerly to the Trivandrum district of Kerala, is now in Kanyākumārī district of Tamil Nadu. This temple has grown in different periods. Its antiquity goes back to the early Pāṇḍyas. Most of the Krishṇa scenes occur on the facades of the Chempakaraman Maṇḍapa ascribable to the 16th century.

The representation of Krishṇa scenes in Śuchīndram include, as we know, many exploits of his early life, such as Yaśodā having Krishṇa on her lap; Pūtanā-vadha; Śakaṭa-bhaṅga, Krishṇa stealing butter; a woman leading Krishṇa by hand; Yaśodā tying Krishṇa to a mortar; Bakāsura-vadha; Krishṇa with cows and cow-boys, Vatsāsura-vadha; Kāliya-mardana; Pralamba-vadha, Govardhanadhāraṇa; dance of Krishṇa; Veṇugopāla, Kubjānugraha; fight with the Mallas and Kamsa-vadha. Krishṇa's *Viśvarūpa* form has been elaborately depicted on the northernmost panel of the base of the *Gopuram*. To his left is shown Arjuna kneeling and invoking the Lord's blessings (K. K. Pillai, *The Śuchīndram Temple*, Madras, 1953, pp. 381 ff).

The tradition of Krishṇa worship in Tamil Nadu was nourished also by the poets, saints and scholars, like Vedāntadeśika and several others. Vedāntadeśika was a versatile scholar and the renowned author of the *Yādavābhyudaya* dealing with the life of Krishṇa, composed between the 13th and 14th century.

The Raṅganātha inscription of Goppana (1371-72) throws interesting light on the history of Vaishṇavism during this period. It states that when the Musalmans captured Tiruchchirappalli, the image of Vishṇu was removed to Tirumalai (Tirupati) and subsequently one Goppanaryar brought it back to Śrīraṅgam and consecrated it. On this occasion Vedāntadeśika praised him for his good work (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VII, pp. 322-330). Vedāntadeśika's first direct disciple was perhaps one Vaishṇavadāsa who seems to be mentioned in the Conjeevaram inscription of 1359 A.D. (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXV, pp. 318 ff). It states that Vaishṇavadāsa was given the title of Brahma-tantrasvatantra-jiyar by the god Hastigiriśa. He was also in charge of a Maṭha, evidently at Kāñchīpura (which was an important centre of Vaishṇavism side by side with Śaivism). "This information is of interest for the Vaishṇava religious history as it enables us to identify the first pontiff of the Maṭha with the direct disciple of the great Vedāntadeśika, the erudite scholar, keen controversialist and deeply venerated Vaishṇava Āchārya whose literary and religious activites are said to have extended over a major portion of the 14th century A. D. (*Epigraphia Indica*, XXV, pp. 318 ff).

Another South Indian scholar who dwelt on the Krishṇa theme is Rājachūḍāmaṇidīkshita, who was a contemporary of Raghunātha Nāyaka of Tanjore in the 17th century. His book *Rukmiṇī-kalyāṇa* describes the abduc-

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tion and marriage of Rukmiṇī (K. A. N. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 342).

The Bhakti literature claimed the attention of many other poets and devotees. Among them mention may be made of two Tamil translations of the *Bhāgavaṭa Purāṇa*, one by Śevvai-c-chuḍuvār and another by Varadarāja Aiyangar, both of the 16th century (K. A. N. Sastri, *cp. cit.*, pp. 376 and 377).

Svāmī Nārāyaṇa Tirtha's *Krishṇalilātaraṅgiṇī* is a beautiful musical poem. He had an attack of severe colic when he visited the Venkaṭesabhūpati Rājapuram at Tanjore. As he prayed to the Lord, he was cured of the disease. It is here that he composed the *Krishṇalīlātaraṅgiṇī* (in twelve taraṅgas), describing the exploits of Krishṇa from his birth to his establishment in Dvārakā. Of about the same period is Sadāśiva Brahmendra (17th century), a great philosopher, who wrote beautiful *ṣtotras* on Krishṇa. (S. N. Dasgupta & S. K. De, *op. cit.*, p. 396).

It is interesting to note that on the ceilings of the Saṅgītamaṇḍapa in the Vardhamāna temple, *Tirupparuttikuṅram*, in Kāñchī there is a series of paintings, depicting scenes from the lives of Rishabhanātha, the first Tīrthaṅkara, Neminātha, the twenty-second Tīrthaṅkara and Krishṇa. These paintings are labelled in Tamil and belong stylistically to the Nāyaka period, i.e. the seventeenth-eighteenth century. The life of Krishṇa depicted here is based mainly on the Jaina *Śrī-Purāṇa*. T. N. Ramachandran in his book *Tirupparuttikuṅram and its Temples* has described elaborately the paintings in question, which illustrate the marriage of Vasudeva and Devakī, birth of Krishṇa, Vasudeva removing the child from the chamber of nativity, and delivering him to the care of Nandagopa, the sports of child Krishṇa, and annihilation by him of the evil spirits, like Pūtanā, Keśī, Arishṭa and others, Krishṇa raising Mount Govardhana, plucking a lotus-flower from a tank after subduing a nāga, killing Kuvalayāpīḍa, vanquishing a wrestler, killing Kamsa, Krishṇa's victory over Mahābala, and Aparājita (Jarāsandha's sons), the fight of Yādavas under the leadership of Krishṇa, the founding of the city of Dvārakā, Krishṇa requesting Neminātha to look after the city of Dvārakā during his absence to fight with Jarāsandha, fight between Krishṇa and Jarāsandha, Krishṇa being crowned as Chakravartī, etc. (T. N. Ramachandran, *Tirupparuttikuṅram* and *its Temples*, Madras Government Museum, 1954, pp. 133ff).

The life of Krishṇa has been delineated here in the background of the Jaina tradition in which Neminātha has been shown more powerful than Krishṇa. So, the details represented differ here and there from those of the Hindu sources, such as the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata*, etc. One who is interested in studying the Jaina version of Krishṇa's life may study the Jaina *Harivaṁśa*, *Śrī Purāṇa*, the *Śatruñjaya-māhātmya*, etc.

Under the Marathas, Tanjore became an important centre of painting. The Maratha rulers encouraged also music, dance and literary composition. With the *Tanjore artists the Rāmāyaṇa* and *Krishṇa-līlā* and other mythological scenes were very popular. Regarding the *Krishṇa-līlā* scenes, the most interesting ones are the depictions of the boy Krishṇa holding the butter ball, Krishṇa crawling, etc.

Thus it is clear that Tamil Nadu has a continuous tradition of Krishṇa worship from the earliest times through the centuries. The Vishṇu and Krishṇa temples of the Pallava, Chola and subsequent times as well as the representation of scenes from Krishṇa's life on Vaishṇava, Śaiva and other temples and also the Bhakti movement of the Āḷvārs, Śrīvaishṇavas and other philosophers bear ample testimony to this.

KERALA

THE tradition of Krishṇa worship in Kerala seems to be very old. As the legend goes, Lord Krishṇa, immediately before his ascent to his eternal abode, Vaikuṇṭha, advised his dear disciple and counsellor, Uddhava to transfer the image of the supreme God (Nārāyaṇa) which he worshipped himself in Dvārakā to a safe place with the help of Brihaspati (Guru).

When Śrī Krishṇa departed from Dvārakā, the city was submerged in water and the holy image was being tossed in it. In the mean time, Brihaspati came to Dvārakā, with his disciple Vāyu, the god of the wind. They rescued the image from the water and passing through many kingdoms, came to Kerala where they found a safe place to instal it. This sacred spot is associated with the famous Guruvayur temple of the Trichur district. Whatever may be the authenticity of this story, Vaishṇavism seems to have penetrated into Kerala quite early. At any rate, it was in flourishing condition in the time of the Kulaśekharavarman (c. 800 A. D.) who is believed to be the founder of the second Chera dynasty. Kulaśekhara was an able administrator and competent ruler. But his

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mind turned to religion and he renounced the world. He was an ardent devotee of Krishṇa and his *Mukundamālā* in honour of Vishṇu is an excellent composition showing devotional intensity as well as a proper sense of style.[1] He is considered as one of the important Āḷavārs.

It is interesting to note that an inscription has been found at Pagan, which contains a verse from the *Mukundamālā* in Grantha alphabet and a prose passage in Tamil characters of the 13th century. This inscription probably formed part of the Vishṇu temple at Pagan. This temple it appears was founded and restored by the merchants coming to Pagan from various countries including Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Whatever it may be, the inscription shows the popularity of the *Mukundamālā* as a devotional poem.[2]

Kulaśekhara is the sixth of the twelve Āḷvārs whose religious zeal and devotion brought a great change in the religious outlook of South India, emphasising *Bhakti* as the easiest means of attaining salvation.

Kulaśekhara visited the sacred shrine of Śrīraṅgam and other temples. 'His experiences are embodied in the *Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi* containing 103 stanzas'. Further, he is credited with the construction of the Krishṇa temple in Thirukulaśekharapuram near Thiruvanchikulam.

Kulaśekhar's successor to the throne was Rājaśekharavarma. He was, however, devoted to Śaivism and is identified with the Śaiva saint Cheramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār.[3]

Since the time of Kulaśekhara, Vaishṇavism seems to have more or less a continuous history in Kerala. Though most of the rock-cut temples of Kerala are of the Śaiva origin, one from Alagiapandipuram (now in, Kanyakumari district) was dedicated to Vishṇu.[4] The back-wall of the cell of this temple contains the representation of a four-armed Vishṇu. Among the other ancient temples associated with Vaishṇavism, mention may be made of those at Trikkakkara Tirumulikkulam, Triuchanganur, Thiruvananda puram, Thirukkodittanam, Thiruvanvandur, Thiruppauliyar, Thiruvallava, Thiruppatisaram, Thiruvattur, Thiruaranmula, Thirumavi and Thirunelli.[5] The date of these temples go back to the 9th-10th century A. D. Of the same period also, is the Vaishṇava shrine of Pārthivaśekharapuram (which has, however, undergone many architectural modifications in later days).[6] That Vaishṇavism was popular in this period is also attested by two beautiful bronze Vishṇu images in Pallava style, now housed in the Trivandrum Museum.[7] They have affinities to the stone sculptures in the cave temples at Kaviyur, Irunilakkode and Vizhinjan, and are ascribable to the 8th-9th century A.D.[8]

Of circa 11th century is the ancient temple at Trikkodittanam in Changanachherry Taluk with two Yāli panels representing two ancient types of dances called Kuḍaikoothu (umbrella dance) and Kuḍakūttu (pot dance).[9] The Kuḍakūttu may represent the Kuḍū dance which Krishṇa performed in the streets of 'So' in Bāṇāsura's city as mentioned in the Śangam literature. Mention may be made here also of a standing figure of Krishṇa in stone from central Travancore, belonging to the collection of Shri Dinesan Natesan. The figure is two-armed. The deity holds a flower-like object in his right hand and the left hand is on the *Kati*. It shows late Pallava style and can be placed to c. 10th-11th century A. D.[10]

Vaishṇavism seems to have been very popular in Kerala during this time, as is attested also by literary sources. Līlāśuka, originally known as Bilvamaṅgala, and a devotee of Krishṇa, flourished in Malabar about this period, i.e. the eleventh century A. D. His *Krishṇakārṇāmritam* is a poem of enthralling emotion. It consists of about 300 stanzas describing the beauty of Krishṇa and his childhood exploits and his love of the Gopīs. For the simplicity of style and rhythmic language *Krishṇakarṇāmritam* became very popular throughout the country. He is *said* to have composed also the *Vrindāvanastuti* describing the *Rāsakrīḍā*.[11] There is a belief that he was reborn as Jayadeva and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri. This perhaps shows that he flourished earlier than Jayadeva and Nārayāṇa Bhaṭṭatiri. To show the continuity of the Vishṇu-Krishṇa cult in Kerala, mention may be made of a standing Bāla Krishṇa image (stone, 12th—13th century) pertaining to the Nārāyaṇakānur Vishṇu temple, Ramantali, Cannanore district (fig. 52) and beautiful image of Vishṇu in the Neeramankara temple, two miles east of Trivandrum.[12] The image which is Yogasthānakamūrti can be ascribed to the 14th century A. D. Vaishṇava deities, such as Vishṇu with consorts, Narasimha killing Hiraṇyakaśipu figure also in rafter shoes of the Kerala temples of the 14th-15th century A. D. and later. Inside the Padmanābhasvāmī temple in Trivandrum, there is a Krishṇa shrine with frescoes of probably the 14th century.

Now our attention may be drawn to some of the exquisite wood carvings (in which the Kerala artists have shown excellence, illustrating the Bhāgavata scenes. Splendid examples of wood carving exist on the ceiling of the Namaskāra Maṇḍapa of the Tiruvampadi shrine in the Padmanābhasvāmi temple at Trivandrum. According to a Sanskrit inscription there, King Āditya-

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Illustration from the Bālagopāla-stuti; Vilvamaṅgala praying to Krishṇa, Western Indian Style, 16th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

varmasarvāṅganātha built the shrines of Krishṇa and the adjacent buildings in the Śaka year 1296 (A. D. 1374-75).[13] The scenes are illustrative of Hindu mythological stories. The Śiva temple at Ettumanur (about 16th century) has also notable examples of wood work with *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Krishṇalīlā* scenes.[14] A fine piece of wood carving now preserved in the old rock-cut temple at Irunilakkode has on the upper part the representation of ecstatic dance of Krishṇa and Gopīs. This is a masterly treatment of the theme. Krishṇa encircled by the Gopīs stands playing on his flute sweet melodies of music to the tune of which the dance is performed.[15] Besides these there are representations of Vishṇu and Krishṇa themes in many other temples in Kerala.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (1350-1450) are very important so far as the *Bhakti* or *Bhāgavata* literature in Kerala is concerned. During this period were born some outstanding literary figures, such as Mādhava Panikkar, Śaṅkara Panikkar and their nephew, Rāma Panikkar. Their writing is marked by simple diction or style. Mādhava Panikkar's translation of the *Gītā* into Malayalam is one of the earliest in regional languages. Mādhava brings out a loving picture of Krishṇa as a child god. The verses give a clear visualisation of the Lord as his exploits are narrated.[16]

In the *Bhāratamālā*, Śaṅkara Panikkar not only describes the early life of Krishṇa as in the tenth *Skandha* of the *Bhāgavata*, but also his later life as depicted in the *Mahābhārata*. The story is condensed in about 1500 quatrains. Rāma Panikkar gave the rendering of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Bhārata* and the *Bhāgavata*. They are known as Niranam poets as they belonged to a family, Niranam, in central Kerala.[17]

Cherusseri was another notable author of this period. His *Krishṇagāthā* in Malayalam which in forty-seven cantos is a *Kāvya* on the life of Krishṇa and is a source of delight to the readers for its felicity of expression. He based his depiction on the *Bhāgavata*. The dominant *rasa* or flavour in the *Krishṇagāthā* is the *vātsalya*, i.e. the parental love of a devotee for the child god Krishṇa.[18]

Cherusseri had a power of visualisation. His poems bring before our mind's eye the fawns listening intently to Krishṇa's flute with ears erect, the half chewed blades of grass falling forgotten from their mouths and sticking, wet and gleaming to the body. The ear-rings of Yaśodā swing in while she churns the butter. Again, there is the sombre picture of Kamsa, mentally distrubed, and threatening to kill his sister Devakī after he heard the prophecy that her eighth child would kill him.[19]

The Portuguese period, inspite of political turmoil, saw the revival of the Bhakti movement in Kerala. The most outstanding exponent of the Bhakti cult of the time was Tunchat Ezhuthachan, who is considered to be the father of modern Malayalam language. His works, *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhāratam*, and *Harināma Kīrtanam* preached the doctrine of selfless devotion.[20]

Ezhuthachan was followed by Melpathur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri (c. 1560-1646) and Puntanam Namboothiri, both of whom made Guruvayur temple the centre of their activities. Bhaṭṭatiri was born in a Nambudiri Brahmin family about the beginning of the 16th century A. D. He led a dissolute life in the beginning. At the instance, however, of Achyuta Pisharoti, he engaged himself in Vedic studies and devotional practices. His *Prabandhas*, eighteen in number, appealed to

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the readers for their simplicity of style and devotional flavour..

Once he was afflicted with acute rheumatism. When there was no chance of recovery he made fervent appeal to Krishṇa, the Lord of the Guruvayur temple and composed the *Nārāyaṇīyam* in his honour. He was completely cured as he recited the last and the hundredth daśaka of the *Nārāyaṇīyam*. The *Nārāyaṇīyam* is a great poem testifying to the scholarship of Bhaṭṭattiri and intensity of his devotion.[21]

Puntanam Namboothiri (sixteenth century), a contemporary of Bhaṭṭattiri, was also a great devotee of Krishṇa. He occupies a high place as a poet in Malayalam. His works *Krishṇakarṇāmritam* and *Santāna Gopālam* are fine compositions, evoking *bhakti* in the minds of the people. His position in Malayalam literature is comparable to that of Sūradāsa in Hindi. There is a story that Bhaṭṭattiri, the author of the *Nārāyaṇīyam*, who was a profound Sanskrit scholar, refused to listen to the recitation of Puntanam's *Santāna Gopālam* in Malayalam. This caused the annoyance of Lord Krishṇa who appeared before him in dream and said that he preferred the *bhakti* (i.e. devotional excellence) of Puntanam to the *vibhakti* (grammatical excellence) of Bhaṭṭattiri. This shows the popularity of Puntanam's inspired and devout compositions which made an appeal to the people at large.[22]

Some of the contemporary local Rājās also were patrons of the Bhakti cult. Among them, mention may be made of Mānaveda (1655-58), the Zamorin of Calicut, and Puratan Tiruval Devanārāyaṇa (1566-1622), ruler of Chempakasseri. Both of them were devout followers of Vaishṇavism.[23]

Mānaveda's *Krishṇagīti* in Sanskrit, in eight cantos, describes the story of Krishṇa on the model of Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govinda*, Devanārāyaṇa consecrated the idol of Krishṇa in the Ambalapuzha temple and the place developed as the Guruvayur of South Kerala.[24]

The Bhakti movement in Kerala during the Portuguese period was responsible for the subsequent popularity of the Krishṇa theme in the country. Not only the poets and scholars delineated the theme with fervour in their composition, the artists and craftsmen also found in it a chief source of their inspiration. We have already dealt with the important Vaishṇava sculptures in stone, wood, metal, etc. we may now refer to the Krishṇa shrine in Guruvayur, which is the most popular of all temples in Kerala. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭattiri and many other scholars, poets and devotees made Guruvayur the centre of their activities.

The origin and antiquity of this temple is not clearly known. It, however, came into prominence in the sixteenth century. Square in shape, it is enclosed on the east and south by a lofty laterite wall, on the west by tiled buildings which serve as a rest-house for the pilgrims and the north by a big tank.[25] The temple draws a large number of pilgrims, including those afflicted with rheumatism.

Guruvayur is the main centre of the Vaishṇava activities from the 16th century onward. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭattiri and many other saints, scholars and poets as already mentioned lived here and preached the doctrine of love and devotion.

The popularity of the Krishṇa cult down to the 17th-19th centuries in Kerala is attested also by the representation of the *Bhāgavata* scenes alongside the *Rāmāyaṇa* and other mythological stories in the wall paintings of the Mattancherry Palace, Padmanābhapura palace and by those in the Trichur and other temples.

The Mattancherry palace in Cochin was built by the Portuguese in 1557 for the ruler Vīrakeralvarman. This was the time when Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri and Puntanam Namboothiri were preaching the doctrine of *bhakti* to the masses through their writings. While the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme dominates most of the paintings in Mattancherry Palace, there are some in the Room No. 5 of the Palace dealing with *Krishṇa-līlā*, i.e. the Girigovardhana scene and Krishṇa's sports with the Gopīs (18th century). Krishṇa and his parents are beautifully depicted in the wall painting of Trichakrapuram. The Vadakkunatha temple at Trichur also contains some paintings on Krishṇa theme, namely, the Girigovardhana and Krishṇa receiving Sudāmā.[26] These show affinities in style to the Mattancherry paintings.

The murals from Elangannuppazha (Ernakulam) representing Yaśodā and Krishṇa and Girigovardhana episode (figs. 45 and 121) show the boldness of delineation as in the case of the Mattancherry school. The Veṇugoapāla from Tali, Calicut (fig. 60) and the Vastraharaṇa scene from Ettumanur (fig. 106) possess the same qualities. Veṇugopāla painted in the Padmanābhapura Palace is somewhat late in date.

The above discussion would make it clear that the Krishṇa cult was very popular in Kerala from the time of Kulaśekhara down the centuries. Most of the late temples whether Śaivite or Vaishṇavite contain woodcarvings and paintings showing Krishṇa episodes, side by side with other mythological scenes. It is still a living cult there, with Guruvayur as its main centre. The wall paintings of Kerala seem to have exercised a great influence on Raja Ravivarma in his work.

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KARNATAKA

AS in Tamil Nadu and other parts of South India, Vaishṇavism spread to Karṇāṭaka during the early centuries of the Christian era. That it was a firmly established religion by the 5th century A. D. in Karnataka area is evident from the Banavasi inscription of the Kadamba King Mrigeśa-varman (A.D. 450-475). The inscription, which is engraved on a square stone pillar begins with an invocation to Vishṇu (*jitam Bhagavtā*), followed by a verse in Upajāti metre, describing Vishṇu as Jyotirmaya (lustrous), the creator of the universe, lord of both the movable and immovable and as one having many forms (R. Gopal, "A New Kadamba Inscription", *Indian History Congress*, 1970, pp. 54-58).

Jyotirmayam Brahma-vidām śaraṇyam
viśvasya karttāram-anekarūpam
vibhum patim sthāvarajaṅgamānām
Vishṇum namasyāmi tad-eka-chittam.

Mrigeśa to whose rule the record refers, seems to have ruled from A. D. 450 to 475 or 455 to 480. The popularity of Vaishṇavism including Krishṇa worship grew with the passage of time in Karṇāṭaka side by side with that of Śaivism and other cults. The bas-reliefs of Bādāmi and sculptures of the temples in Aihole and Paṭṭaḍakal bear an ample testimony to this.

"The date of the entire group of caves at Bādāmi is determined by the inscription of the Western Chalukya king Maṅgaleśa (dated Saka 500-578 A. D.) on a pillar in the verndah of cave No. III as well as by a Kanarese inscription of the same king on the rock wall outside cave No. III." No other caves bear any inscription. Cave No. 1, which is a Śaiva cave seems to be the earliest in date (R.D. Banerji, *Bas Reliefs of Badami*, Memoir, *Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 25, p. 2).

Cave, No. II, contains some of the finest Vaishṇavite sculptures, such as Trivikrama, Varāha rescuing the Earth goddess, Vishṇu in Vaikuṇṭha, and Śrī-Lakshmi in addition to Śiva and Pārvatī, Kāma and Rati, etc. But the chief interest of this cave in relation to our subject is a number of friezes showing mythological scenes, and exploits of Krishṇa. Mention may be made in this connection of the panels showing among other themes the Earth Goddess appealing to Vishṇu to relieve the earth of the burden of the wicked kings, the defeat of the asuras and churning of the ocean, Devī killing the Buffalo-demon, etc. The scenes from Krishṇa's life include the birth of Krishṇa, Krishṇa stealing butter, the death of Pūtanā, the uprooting of the Yamalārjuna trees, the upturning of the cart, the killing of Vatsa, Arishṭa, Dhenuka, the submission of Kālīya, the lifting of Govardhana, the killing of Kamsa's brothers, etc. (R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.*, pls. XI and XII).

The next cave to be mentioned here is the one which presents the largest number of *Bhāgavata* scenes . The bas-reliefs on various lintels of the cave portray the following *Bhāgavata* episodes: Vishṇu lying on the ocean receives the deputation of gods, Daityas oppressing the earth in the form of bulls, Vishṇu announcing his next incarnation to the gods, the assembly of the gods on the shores of the ocean of milk, the failure of gods to lift Mandara wihout support, the churning of the ocean, Krishṇa carrying Pārijāta tree to Dvārakā, Pārijāta tree planted by Krishṇa in Satyabhāmā's court, fight between Krishṇa and Indra for the Pārijāta, Subhadrā-haraṇa, Hiraṇyakaśipu-vadha, death of Pūtanā, Śakaṭa-bhaṅga, killing of Vatsa, and Dhenuka, uprooting of Yamalārjuna, Kamsa's visit to Devakī and Vasudeva in prison, Kamśa's attendants attempting to kill Krishṇa's elder sister, the birth of Krishṇa, his transfer to Gokula, the coronation of Krishṇa and his tending of the cows in Vraja, the lifting of Govardhana, killing of Dhenuka and Kuvalayāpīḍa, Kālīyadamana, killing of Mushṭika and Chāṇūra, Krishṇa and Balarāma entering the wrestling arena in Mathurā, the fight with the Mallas of Kamsa, Kamsa deputing the Mallas to assassinate Krishṇa and Balarāma, etc. (R.D.Banerji, *op. cit.*, pls. XII-XV).

The Malegitti Śivālaya in Bādāmi seems to have been originally dedicated to Vishṇu, as it has got on the ceiling a beautiful figure of Vishṇu on Garuḍa. A standing figure of Vishṇu occurs also on the north face of the temple outside between two windows. Again, Henry Cousens identifies a sculptured group of two figures in the recess between the corner of the doorway and the outer pilaster of the same on the south as Krishṇa, overcoming Keśī. The larger figure, as Cousens describes, is that of a man holding a club in the right hand and apparently the hair of the figure below in his left. This is a human being from the waist upwards but with the horse's posterior and hind legs. The larger figure has his right leg raised and planted on the horse's legs. This sculpture probably represents Vishṇu or Keśava slaying the demon Keśī who took the form of a horse (Henry Cousens, *The Chalukyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Calcutta, 1926, p. 54).

The inscription of Maṅgaleśa from a pilaster near the east end of the verandah of the Brahmanical caves at Bādāmi describes

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the Chāḷukyas as worshippers of the feet of the Lord (Vishṇu) and that Maṅgaleśa in the 12th year of his reign (five hundred years having passed since the coronation of the Śaka Kings) built on the site the holy house of the great Vishṇu and held a festival for the inauguration of the image of Vishṇu. This shows that the Western Chālukyas had great predilecations towards Vaishṇavism (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. III, p. 305).

The Mallikārjuna temple at Paṭṭaḍakal not only contains the *Bhāgavata* scenes as the churning of the ocean and the representation of the Avatāras, along with the Śaivite deities, but also Krishṇa scenes, such as the lifting of the mountain Govardhana, the killing of Dhenuka, Keśī, Arishṭa, Kuvalayāpīḍa, Chānūra, other supporters of Kamsa and finally Kamsa himself (Henry Cousens, *op. cit.*, pp. 66 and 67).

The Pāpanātha temple and Saṅgameśvara temple at Paṭṭaḍakal, the Durgā temple, the Nārāyaṇa temple and Huchchappayamatha in Aihole also show Vishṇu figures of the 6th-8th century A. D. (Henry Cousens, *op. cit.*, p. 68).

The history of Vaishṇavism along with the cult of Krishṇa during the 8th-12th centuries in Karṇāṭaka may be studied from a large number of Vaishṇavite monuments and images from Tuḷu Nād and other parts of the State. Tuḷu Nād may be called the home of Krishṇa cult. Though no epigraphical evidence as to the popularity of Vaishṇavism in the State is available earlier than 11th century, the study of art and architecture shows that the cult was popular here as early as the 7th-8th century. The Janāradana figure from the Vishṇumūrti temple, Kak-kunje, Sivaḷḷī, South Kanara, and Janārdana, Mallampaḷḷi Sivaḷḷi, Udipi Taluk, South Kanara which according to Gururaja Bhatt, are ascribable to c. 7th-8th century, bear testimony to this (P. Gururaja Bhatt, *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture*, 1975, p. 315and pl. 177) Again, Śri Krishṇa in Udipi Matha, Udipi, belongs to this period (*op. cit.*, pl. 239 a). The images of Krishṇa, Balarāma, and Ekānamśā or Durgā which issued forth from the cake of Gopīchandana broken open by Śrī Madhvāchārya, the philosopher saint, though now found installed within a few miles of one another represent a group which was well known long before that personality of the medieval age. The classical locale of the cult of this group had been the ancient city of Janārdana in the great temple of which is installed the group of Krishṇa, Saṅkarshana and Subhadrā, (T. G. Aravamuthan, "Origin and Growth of Religion, Indian Evidence," *Transactions of the Archaeological Society., South India.* Vol. I, 1955, p. 104).

Again, Hastāmalaka, the disciple of Śaṅkara is said to have propagated Vaishṇavism in West Coast, with the permission of his Guru. He first visited Rajatapitha (Udipi) and installed here an image of Krishṇa. This icon of Veṇugopāla-Krishṇa seems to be one of the earliest of its kind in South India (P. Gururaja Bhatt, *op. cit.*, pls. 220).

The Narasimha images from Guru Narasimha temple, Sāḷigrāma, Udipi Tank, and those from Narasimha temple, Ganganāḍu and from Poḷia, Bantwal Taluk, South Kanara are also old, belonging probably to 8th-9th century (*op. cit*, pls. 210 and 211).

There are a large number of Vaishṇava temples and images also of the subsequent periods from Tuḷu Nād.

The image enshrined in the sanctum sanctorum of the Vishṇu temple in Karkal (c. 10th century) is that of Ananta Padmanābha, while in the niches are seen Saṅkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. "Clearly this is a temple of Vishṇu in his *Vyuha* manifestation—exemplifying the acceptance in Tuḷu Nāḍ of a practice of dedicating temples in comformity with the Pāñcharātra cult of a four-fold manifestation of Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa" (T. G. Aravamuthan, "Origin and Growth of Religion, Indian Evidence," *Transactions of the Archaeological Society, South India*, Vol. I, 1955, p. 103).

There is a temple in Maravante, Coondapur Taluk, dedicated to Varāhasvāmī. This temple may be ascribed to 9th-10th century A. D. (P. Gururaja Bhatt, *op. cit.*, p. 316).

Arthapura (Attavara) of Mangaḷūru was a big centre of Vishṇu worship, where a temple of Chakrapāṇi was erected in honour of Krishṇa (Gopīnātha) in the 14th century.

The temples dedicated to Gopīnātha in Tuḷu Nāḍ are many and speak of the popularity of the Krishṇa cult. There are many temples, dedicated also to Janārdana, who is treated as the bestower of salvation on the departed souls (*op. cit.*, p. 318).

Apart from the above, the Vishṇu and Krishṇa images of various types are to be found in different parts of Tuḷu Nāḍ, testifying to the overwhelming popularity of this cult in the region (P. Gururaja Bhatt, *op. cit.*, pp. 314 ff). In the course of time, however, with the advent of Śrī Madhvāchārya, Udipi became the main centre of Vaishṇavism. The Vaishṇava images of Tuḷu Nāḍ fall broadly into the following categories: the twenty-four forms of Vishṇu, Anantaśāyī, Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Para-Vāsudeva, Krishṇa (Gopīnātha) Narasimha, Garuḍa-vāhana, Śrīnivāsa. Rāma Hayagrīva, Śrīkaramūrti, Paraśurāma, Varāhā, etc. These images are of great iconographic interest.

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The Seüṇa rule (12th century) also witnessed the popularity of this cult. The Seüṇas claim their descent from the Yādava family and they assumed the title Yādava-Nārāyaṇa. There is also a tradition that they migrated from Dvārakā to the Karṇāṭaka country (P. B. Desai, *History of Karnataka*, Dharwar, 1970, p. 218). Chakradhara founded the Mahānubhava sect during this time. This new doctrine centres round the devotion to Krishṇa. This sect made no distinction between the caste and community among its followers (P. B. Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 243).

The Mahānubhavas consider the *Bhagavadgītā* as their chief scripture and they worship no god other than Krishṇa. They, however, do not worship any image. They worship a symbol in a shrine in the name of God. They look upon Dattātreya as the original founder of their sect and call their Sampradāya as a Dattātreya Sampradāya. (J. N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, pp. 247 and 48). This sect has the largest concentration in Maharashtra and Karṇāṭaka.

During the rule of the Hoysaḷas (11th-14th century) both Śaivism and Vaishṇavism were equally popular. Vaishṇavism had several phases, the early Vishṇu-Vāsudeva or Bhāgavata school and Vaishṇavism of the Tamil Āḻvārs, which further developed into the schools of Rāmānuja and Madhva.

Both Rāmānuja and Madhva laid stress on devotion to Vishṇu as a means to attaining salvation. Naraharitīrtha, one of the direct disciples of Madhva, initiated a new movement known as the Bhakti movement of Haridāsa who popularised the movement through melodious songs.

The Krishṇa legends find elaborate representation on a large number of Hoysaḷa temples and shrines. But before we refer to the important Hoysaḷa temples with Vaishṇavite affiliations or mythologies, we may describe the literary sources throwing light on the subject.

It is well known that Hoysaḷa king Someśvara penetrated into the interior of the Seüṇa territory to make a grant to God Viṭṭhala of Pandharpur (1236 A. D.) (P. B. Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 295).

Among the Vaishṇavite works of importance during the Hoysaḷa period mention may be made of the *Rukmiṇī-kalyāṇa*, written by Vidyā-chakravarti who flourished during the Hoysaḷa rule. Rudra-bhaṭṭa (1185 A. D.) wrote the *Champū* work: *Jagannātha-vijaya*, which describes the life of Krishṇa up to his fight with Bāṇāśura based on the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*. It may be interesting to note that about 1146, Karṇapārya wrote the *Neminātha Purāṇa* (a *Champū*) in which the story of Krishṇa's life found a prominent mention.

The greatest apostle of Vaishṇavism during the Hoysaḷa period was Madhvāchārya, who flourished between 1238 and 1317 A. D. The main source of information on his life is the book *Madhvavijaya*. He was born at Pajākakshetra, near Udipi in South Kanara. His childhood name was Vāsudeva. He received his education under the learned Āchārya Achyutapreksha. He became a Sannyāsī at the age of sixteen and assumed the names of Ānandatīrtha, Pūrṇaprājña and Madhva.

He carefully studied Śaṅkara's *Śārīrikabhāshya* and Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahmasūtramīmāṁsā*. But later on he was drawn towards the Vaishṇava doctrines and the study of the *Bhāgavata* exercised a great influence on his religious life. He advocated the supremacy of Vishṇu who is the first cause. Vishṇu and Lakshmī are real, though they are mysterious beings.

His religion, however, centred round the adoration of Krishṇa through Bhakti as propounded in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa;* Rādhā has no place in Madhva's teachings.

Madhva travelled widely both in the south and north India and won many followers. He made Udipi his main centre of activities and built there a temple of Krishṇa and eight monasteries for the propagation of his faith.

He was a great scholar and writer. His works include, according to tradition, the *Gītā-bhāshya*, *Sūtrabhāshya*, *Aṇubhāshya* (or two together *Bhāshyānubhāshya*), *Dvādaśastotra Rigbhāshya*, *Gītātātparya*, *Mahābhāratatātparya-nirṇaya*, *Pramāṇa-lakshaṇa*, *Tattvasaṅkhyāyana*, *Māyāvādakhaṇḍana*, *Tattvadyota*, *Vishṇutattvanirṇaya*, and others which formed the glosses on the *Upanishads* mostly (*Three Great Acharyas*, Natesan and Company, Madras, pp. 189 ff: B. A. Salatore, *Ancient Karnataka*, Poona, 1936, pp. 441 ff, P. B. Desai, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-295).

Madhva made Udipi the rallying centre of Vaishṇavism. The image of Krishṇa which he installed in the Udipimaṭha 'was awakened to spiritual magnetism by the touch of his loving hands' as is described in the *Madhvavijaya*.

The Udipi Krishṇa is one of the most rare iconographic forms of Krishṇa. The Lord stands erect with a churning rod in his right hand and a churning rope in the left with a divine smile on the lips. Vādirāja Svāmī describes His glory in the *Tīrthaprabaṇdha:* "May the Lord Śrī Krishṇa be pleased with us, the Lord who stands in the temple at Shivalli, bound by the love of the ascetics of Udipi, holding a shining churning rod in one hand and a beautiful piece of rope in the other and

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reminding (as it were) by his pose that He would churn the souls in the sea of transmigration and in the end confer on them the blessings of redemption." (B. N. K. Sharma, 'Śrī Madhvāchārya and Udipi', *Upāsane*, 1968, p. 4).

nirmathyogra-bhavārṇave nijamanobhīshṭam diśāmiti yaḥ.
samyak jñāpayitum kareṇa vilasanmanthānamanyena cha
ramyam dāma dadhanmaheśarajatagrāma-śriyo' lam-kritiḥ
karmandiśvara-bhakti-bandhanavaśaḥ prīto' stu Krishṇaḥ prabhuḥ.

Chauṇḍrarasa, a zealous devotee of Viṭṭhala, who was probably an inhabitant of a place near about Pandharpur, wrote the Kannada *Champū* work: *Abhinavadaśakumāracharita* containing stanzas in praise of the deity in late 13th century (P. B. Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 295). About the same time Jñāneśvara, the Maharastrian saint who wrote a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* (1290 A. D.) preached devotion to God Viṭṭhala.

The Belur epigraph brings out the popularity of Krishṇa-Keśava as the chief object of veneration in all the sects (B. L. Rice, Mysore and Coorg, London, 1909, p. 205).

"The Śaivas adore him as Śiva,
The Vedāntins extol him as Brahman,
The Bauddhas revere him as Buddha,
The Mīmāmsakas call him Karma,
The Jainas declare him as Arhat,
The Naiyāyikās name him as Kartri,
May this Keśava fulfil your desire."

During the Hoysaḷa period, Krishṇa legends were profusely depicted on the temple walls. The most important temples to be discussed here include the Chennakeśava temple, Belur (1117), the Hoysaḷeśvara temple (1121), the Amriteśvara temple, Amritpur (1196), the Vīra-Nārāyaṇa temple (1206), the Mallikārjuna temple (1234), the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa temple at Hosaholalu (1240), the Keśava temple, Somnathpur (1268), the Lakshmī-Narasimha temple, Nuggihalli and a few others.

The Chennakeśava temple at Belur was built by Vishṇuvardhana Ballāḷa in the year 1117 A.D. It is worth noting that following Kulottuṅga Choḷa's persecution of the Vaishṇavas Rāmānuja sought refuge in Ballāḷā's court and converted the king to Vaishṇavaism.

The sculptural examples of this temple are excellent creations. The main image of Keśava named by Vishṇuvardhana as Vijaya-Nārāyaṇa is a fine example of Hoysaḷa workmanship. Without *kirīṭa* it is 7 ft. high and it is perfectly proportionate.

The ceiling (north-east) of the central dome, Navaraṅga, shows the following Bhāgavata episodes: (1) Krishṇa stealing butter and Yaśodā threatening him with a stick; (2) Balarāma with a gadā, hala, pāśa and phala; (3) Śakaṭa-vadha; (4) Pūtanā-vadha; (5) Krishṇa and milk-pot and (6) Krishṇa meeting Dhenuka (?), etc. (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1931, pp. 26-46).

"It has three entrances, one on each of the free sides of the pillared hall, approached by a flight of steps flanked by a pagoda-like shrine, the last, a useful note of architectural emphasis. On the main pillars of the hall and its recessed ceiling the sculptor has bestowed the largest amount of devotion. The hall is 92 feet by 78 feet and the total number of pillars is fortysix. All of them, except the four in the central bay, are of different design..."

The Hoysaḷeśvara temple, Halebid, built in 1121, is the largest existing Hoysaḷa temple and it is dedicated to Śiva. Around the temple are shown various episodes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and many Śaiva and Vaishṇava *Purāṇas* (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1930, pp. 34ff). The scenes from Krishṇa's life show Vasudeva in prison with guardsman asleep standing; Vasudeva carrying the newly born Krishṇa, protected by Ādi Śesha across the Yamunā, and handing him over to Gopī-devī; Krishṇa's exploits, like Pūtanā-vadha; Bakāsura-vadha; Śakaṭa-bhaṅga and the uprooting of the twin Arjuna trees; the stealing of butter; playing a flute with the Gopīs (even a cobra dancing to the tune of the flute); Govardhana-līlā, showing of the divine form to his Gopa friends; Indra's submission to Krishṇa; Dhenuka-vadha; Krishṇa and Balarāma, accompanied by Akrūra, going to Mathura, Krishṇa favouring Kubjā; breaking the sacrificial bow; killing Kuvalayāpīḍa; vanquishing the wrestlers; fighting Narakāsura; Pārijāta-haraṇa episode, etc.

The Amriteśvara temple in Amritapur dedicated to Śiva, was constructed in 1196 by the Hoysaḷa officer, Amriteśvara Daṇāyaka, during the reign of king Ballāḷa II. It is richly embellished with scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata*. The scenes from the *Bhāgavata* on the railing faces of the temple include: Kamsa shown in his durbar; Vasudeva's request to a donkey not to reveal the birth of Krishṇa; Yogamāyā escaping Kamsa's slaughter; Vasudeva carrying Krishṇa across the Yamunā; the Gopas receiving Krishṇa; Yaśodā taking charge of Krishṇa; Krishṇa in a cradle; the killing of Śakaṭāsura; and of Pūtaṇā; Yaśodā scolding Krishṇa; Krishṇa killing Bakāsura, and Vatsāsura; Krishṇa shown as Veṇugopāla, uprooting the Yamalārjuna; stealing butter, playing on flute; subduing Kāliya; upholding Govardhana; killing Arishṭa and Keśī;

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Akrūra taking Krishṇa and Balarāma to Mathura; Krishṇa slaying Kamsa, etc. The *Mahābhārata* scenes depicted include the burning of the forest Khāṇḍava, the killing of Śiśupāla by Krishṇa at the Rājasūya sacrifice, etc. (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1931, pp. 6-11).

On the ceilings of the Navaraṅga occur the figures of Veṇugopāla, Gaṇeśa, Śiva, Brahmā, etc.

The whole of the temple complex was not built at a time. The main temple, with its garbhagriha, sukanāsi, navaraṅga, and original porches appear to have been built in 1196 A. D. Later on, perhaps, in 1206, the mukhamaṇḍapa was constructed. The temple structures, in workmanship, are characteristically Hoysaḷa (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1931, p. 7).

The Vīra-Nārāyaṇa temple at Velavadi constructed in about 1206 A. D. contains scenes, such as Balarāma pursuing Arjuna (who is carrying off Subhadrā), the Dhenukāsura-vadha, the Govardhana-dhāraṇa, Krishṇa informing Arjuna of the death of Abhimanyu, Kāliya-mardana, etc. (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1933, pp. 80 ff).

The Mallikārjunasvāmī temple at Basral, 15 miles north of Mandya, was built in 1234 by Harihara Daṇāyaka, an officer of the Hoysaḷa Narasimha II (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1934, pp. 39 ff). The Purāṇic frieze of this temple, which is in a good state of preservation, contains illustrations from the epics and the *Bhāgavata*. Among the Krishṇa-stories are: Krishṇa shown on a cradle, Krishṇa slaying a tiger, and a few of his other exploits, such as the Pūtanā-vadha, Bakāsura-vadha, Kāliya-mardana, etc.

The Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa temple at Hosaholalu built about 1240 A. D. is a Trikūṭāchala of the Hoysaḷa style. The mythological frieze of the temple contains, as in many other temples, scenes from Krishṇa's life besides the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* stories. The *Bhāgavata* scenes include: Krishṇa revealing his divinity to his parents in prison, Vasudeva carrying Krishṇa across the Yamunā and exchanging him with the Gopīs' child, Durgā; Krishṇa's life in Gokula, Pūtanā-vadha, Keśī-vadha, Dhenuka-vadha, Bakāsura-vadha, Krishṇa curing and thanking Kubjā, Akrūra taking Krishṇa and Balarāma in a chariot, Krishṇa showing divinity to Akrūra in the Yamunā, fighting Kaṁśa's elephant, overcoming the wrestlers and slaying Kamsa.

Among the images on the wall are Vishṇu and his various forms, Govardhana-līlā, Krishṇa and Satyabhāmā on Garuḍa, fighting for the Pārijāta, etc., The niches have the various forms of Krishṇa (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1933, pp. 3 ff).

The Keśava temple at Somanathpur, about 24 miles east of Mysore, was erected by a Hoysaḷa Governor, called Somanātha-daṇāyaka in 1268 A. D. For the maintenance of the temple he made a grant of land in 1279 with the permission of the Hoysaḷa Emperor Narasimha III (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1932, pp. 17 ff).

On a frieze of this temple are depicted stories from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Bhāgavata*. The *Bhāgavata* stories include Vishṇu as Śeshaśāyī in the milk-ocean, with the devas praying; Vishṇu with Lakshmī in durbar; Vasudeva's marriage procession; Vasudeva carries the baby Krishṇa across the Yamunā to Gokula and the child is handed over to a Gopī; Krishṇa's life in Gokula; Pūtanā-vadha, Yamalārjuna episode; Bakāsura-vadha; the stealing of butter by Krishṇa; Govardhana-dhāraṇa; Viśvarūpa shown by Krishṇa to Gopas and Indra; Krishṇa's sports; the Dhenuka-vadha; Keśī-vadha; Rāsa-līlā; Jala-krīḍā; Kāliya-mardana; Kuvalayāpīḍa-vadha; Kamsa-vadha and the celebration of Krishṇa's victory, etc.

There are a series of pilasters, showing mostly the twenty-four and other forms of Vishṇu The images on the wall include Veṇugopāla, Avatāras and other figures. The Keśava image inside the shrine is a fine example of Hoysaḷa art.

The Lakshmī-Narasimha temple, Nuggihalli, built about 1246, contains sculptures of high workmanship, comparable to those of Hosaholalu and Somnathpur. On the mythological frieze as well as in the south and west niches occur many scenes from Krishṇa's life (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1933, pp. 20-32).

The scenes on the mythological frieze include Śakaṭa-bhaṅga; destruction of the two Arjuna trees; Krishṇa being rocked in a cradle; Pūtanā-vadha; cowherds carrying offerings of milk and curds to Krishṇa; Yaśodā scolding child Krishṇa; Krishṇa showing his open mouth to Yaśodā; Krishṇa stealing butter; playing with Gopas; and many other scenes. The south niche depicts the subjugation of Kāliya, the lifting of Govardhana and Indra asking for Krishṇa's pardon.

The west niche contains a large number of scenes from Krishṇa's life: Krishṇa playing on flute while the cattle, cowherds and even the gods listen and admire and the girls dance; Krishṇa teaching philosophy (?) to the Gopīs; Rāsa-krīḍā, Vastra-haraṇa; Dhenukāsura-vadha; fighting Gardabhāsura and

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Yaśodā bringing up Krishṇa and domestic scenes like rocking the cradle; Krishṇa and cows; Akrūra starting with Krishṇa and Balarāma in a chariot for Mathurā; cowherds accompanying the chariot with milk and butter; Krishṇa showing Viśvarūpa to Akrūra in the Yamunā; Kubjā meeting Krishṇa; Krishṇa's arrival being reported to Kamsa; fight with the wrestlers and the killing of Kuvalayāpīḍa; Kamsa surprised at the defeat of the wrestlers; and Kamsa slain by Krishna, (*Ibid.*).

Apart from the above, there are representations of many forms of Vishṇu and Veṇugopāla.

The Chennakeśava Temple, Aralaguppe, is a single-celled temple with a tower built in c. 13th century (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1935 pp. 3-10). The Purāṇic frieze around the basement of the Garbhagriha and Navaraṅga contains many *Bhāgavata* stories apart from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and other Hindu episodes. The Krishṇa stories depicted include: Vasudeva carrying Krishṇa to Gokula; Kamsa attempting to kill Yogamāyā; Pūtanā sent to Gokula by Kamsa; Krishṇa being fondled by ladies and rocked in cradle; Pūtanā-vadha; Kuvalayāpīḍa-vadha; Yamalārjuna-episode; Dhenukāsura-vadha; Krishṇa and Balarāma defeating the wrestlers, etc., apart from many *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes.

The Lakshmī-Narasimha temple at Bhadravati, Shimoga Taluk, is in Trikūṭāchala style, built in the middle of the 13th century. The sculptures on the walls of the Navaraṅga and in the cells include Veṇugopāla, Kāliyamardana scene and Krishṇa stealing butter from vessels apart from the images of Vishṇu, Janārdana, Keśava, and Govinda, etc. (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1931, pp. 3-5). Apart from the temples and images mentioned above there are many others to be found in Karṇāṭaka including Tuḷu Nāḍ, connected with the history of Krishṇa-cult in the State, which shows the vast popularity of the Krishṇa theme during the Hoysaḷa period.

Vaishṇavism gained in further popularity during the Vijayanagar period. It is well known that in 1513 Krishṇadeva-Rāya marched against Udayagiri (in Nellore district), occupied its exceedingly strong hill fortress (which was there under the occupation of the king of Orissa) and took away to Hampi (Vijayanagar) an image of Krishṇa from a temple on the hill of Udayagiri. It was then that he built at Hampi the famous Krishṇasvāmī temple. There is an inscription to show that the image in question was set up in a Maṇḍapa of his temple. This temple, though now in ruins, is still one of the most interesting objects in the city. Krishṇadeva-Rāya is said to have constructed the Hazara-Rāma temple at Hampi (some scholars are, however, of the opinion that the temple was begun by some earlier ruler of the Vijayanagar dynasty, *Hampi* by Devakunjari, p. 29). This is a small, but highly ornate temple, dedicated to Vishṇu in the form of Rāma. The walls of the Ardhamaṇḍapa contain reliefs showing scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The pillars in the centre of the Ardhamaṇḍapa show the avatāras of Vishṇu, besides the bas-reliefs of Gaṇeśa and Mahishamardinī. Again on the walls of the sanctum are to be found two small figures of Vishṇu in the form of Buddha Avatāra. 'The exterior of the north, east and west enclosing walls contain five rows of friezes showing elephants in procession, horses, infantry, dancing girls and scenes from Krishṇa-līlā. According to an inscription dated 1528, Krishṇadeva-Rāya built a Lakshmī-Narasimha temple and got made by a Brāhmaṇa, a huge Narasimha image out of a single granite boulder.

The brick parapet of the superstructure of a temple now known as Sarasvatī temple, south east of the Narasimha image, has stucco figures including Krishṇa.

Among the other interesting Vaishṇavite subjects of the period, mention may be made of the paintings, portraying besides Śaivite scenes, Daśāvataras, and Arjuna shooting the fish target on the ceiling of the Raṅgamaṇḍapa attached to the Virūpāksha temple.

The other temples of Vaishṇavite interest in Hampi include the Viṭṭhala temple, the Vishṇu temple, etc. Of all the religious edifices at Hampi, the most ornate is the Viṭṭhala temple, which stands on the southern bank of the Tuṅgabhadrā. Though it came into existence as early as Deva-Rāya II's time (A. D. 1422-46) its construction continued upto the time of Achyuta-Rāya. The main temple belongs to Vishṇu as Viṭṭhala. At the base of the temple there are some projections which contain Daśāvatāra figures. Some of the pillars of the Maṇḍapa contain various forms of Narasimha.

The Vishṇu temple which is to the northwest of the Viṭṭhala temple bears inscriptions on the wall saying that 'this temple of Tirumangai Āḻvār was built by Sadāśiva-Rāya" (Devakunjari, *op. cit.*, p. 61).

The popularity of Vaishṇavism in Karṇāṭaka during the Vijayanagar period is attested also by certain literary works. Krishṇadeva-Rāya was himself a great scholar and poet besides being a statesman and warrior of a high rank. His drama *Jāmbavatī-kalyāṇa* shows a poetic skill of a high order. His *Amuktamālyada* or *Vishṇuchittīya* is one of the great Kāvyas in Telugu. 'It deals with the life of the Āḻvār Vishṇuchitta (Periāḻvār), his

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exposition of Vaishṇava philosophy and the love between his foster-daughter Godā and God Raṅganātha" (K. A. N. Sastri, *A History of South India*, p. 401).

Krishṇadeva-Rāya's devotion to Vaishṇavism is attested by his coin-types, including those showing Bālakrishṇa. The child or baby Krishṇa is shown seated with one knee bent resting on the seat and the other raised, supporting the left arm. He holds in his right hand a lump of butter. He is adorned with large ear-rings, a girdle of gingles, anklets and armlets, etc. On the head is a crown of peacock feathers with a string of flowers. In field, to right is a conch and to left a discus. In some specimens, the child is shown with a kind of tight-fitting dress (*Annual Report*, Mysore Archaeological Department, 1930, p. 70). It may be mentioned here that none of his successors had shown Bālakrishṇa as their coin-types.

The Vaishṇava movements began to make its influence felt in Karṇāṭaka in a marked way during the rule of Vijayanagara kings as is evident also from their sources.

The first ten *parvas* (sections) of the *Mahābhārata* were translated by Nāraṇappa, who had a title Kumāravyāsa. He was a rival of Chāmarasa in the reign of Deva-Rāya II. The remaining *parvas* were done in 1510 by Timmanna. He attributed his *Bhārata* to his royal patron, Krishṇadeva-Rāya. The *Bhāgavata* found its translator in Chāṭu Viṭṭhalanātha who flourished during the reign of Krishṇadeva-Rāya and his sucessor Achyuta (K. A. N. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 393).

Popular songs by Dāsas (mendicant singers) were another form of Vaishṇava literature in Kannada during this period. These singers got the inspiration from Madhvāchārya and Vyāsarāya and the visit of Chaitanya to the south in 1510 did much to stimulate the growth of this popular type of songs. Purandaradāsa was the earliest and most prolific of these singers.

Purandaradāsa preached the Vaishṇava faith in Karṇāṭaka through his soul-enthralling songs. He came to Vijayanagar during the reign of Achyuta-Rāya and died in Pandharpur in 1564 (K. A. N. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 393). Kaṇakadāsa of the Dharwar district, who was a contemporary of Purandara, composed many popular lyrics in Kannada in praise of Krishṇa. His *Mohana Taraṅgiṇi* and *Haribhakti-sāra* are very popular among the masses (K. A. N. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 393). Vaishṇavism with a special stress on Krishṇa worship is still a vigorous cult in Kannada with Udipi as a special centre.

TAMIL NADU

1. R. Champakalakshmi, "Vaishṇava Concepts in Early Tamil Nadu", *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. L, Part III, December, 1972, p. 723.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 725.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 727 ff; K. R. Srinivasan, "Some Aspects of Religion as Revealed by Early monuments and literature of the South", *Madras University Journal*, Vol. XXXII, p. 141 ff.
4. "The Vishṇu temple (Site 29) was that of the Ashtabhujasvāmin installed in A. D. 278 during the period of Abhīra contact. Situated at the foot of the Siddhuladari hill, the temple enshrined, as the inscription records, a wooden image of eight-armed Vishṇu, placed on an inscribed stone pedestal.", *Nagarjunakonda* by H. Sarkar and B. N. Misra, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1972, p. 25.
5. R. Champakalakshmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 736 ff.
6. *Ibid.*
7. T. G. Aravamuthan "Transactions of the Archaeological Society", South India, 1962-65, pp. 63-67.
8. R. Champakalakshmi, *Madras University Journal*, Vol. XLII, 1970, pp. 164-166.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
12. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. XIX (Inscription of Parakeśarivarman), Vol. III, No. 132.
13. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, p. 281.
14. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. XIII, No. 130.
15. K. A. N. Sastri, The *Cholas*, Vol. II, Part I, Madras, 1937, pp. 321 ff.

KERALA

1. S. N. Dasgupta and S. K. De, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, University of Calcutta, 1947, pp. 381 ff.
2. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VII, pp. 197 and 198.
3. H. Sarkar, *Monuments of Kerala*, New Dehli, 1973, p.4.
4. H. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
5. Stella Kramrisch, J. H. Cousens, and R. Vasudeva Poduval, *The Arts and Crafts of Kerala*, Madras, 1970, p. 47.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, pls. XLI and XLII
8. *Ibid.*, p. 46
9. *Ibid.* p. 73.
10. Mr. Natesan was kind enough to supply a photograph of the image to me for my study for which I am grateful to him.
11. His other works are the *Krishṇa-bālacharita*, the *Krishṇāhnika-Kaumudī*, the *Govinda-stotra*, the *Bāla-Kristhṇa-kriḍā*, and the *Vilvamangala-stotra*, S. N. Dasgupta and S. K. De, *op. cit.*, pp. 662 and 663.
12. Stella Kramrisch and others, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
13. Stella Kramrisch and others, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
14. Stella Kramrisch and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 138 and 139.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Krishna Chaitanya, *A History of Malayalam Literature*, Orient Longman, 1971, p.76.
17. Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 and 77.
18. A. S. Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1967, p. 233.
19. Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
20. Krishna Chaitanya, *op. cit.*, p. 82 ff.
21. P. N. Menon, *Narayaneeyam of Sri Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiripād*, Palghat, 1961, pp. 1-7 (Introduction).
22. A. S. Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 232 and 233.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. Stella Kramrisch and others, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
26. H. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55 and 66-72; Stella Kramrisch and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-193.

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WESTERN INDIA

MAHARASHTRA

ACCORDING to the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas*, Maharashtra was closely associated with some of the important events of Krishṇa's life. As it is stated in the *Harivaṁśa*, Krishṇa and Balarāma had to leave Mathura under the pressure of Jarāsandha's expedition. They, in the course of their flight, came to Karavīrapura (Kolhapur) where they met Paraśurāma. The latter advised them to go to the Gomantaka hill from where they would be able advantageously to meet Jarāsandha's army that was pursuing them. Gomantaka is identified by scholars with the modern Goa.

At the instigation of Śiśupāla, Jarāsandha set fire to the Gomantaka hill. But undaunted, Krishṇa and Balarāma jumped from the hill to Jarāsandha's army. Jarāsandha was defeated and Krishṇa and Balarāma, accompanied by the Chedī king Damaghosha, came to Karavīrapura, ruled over by a king called Śrigāla. The latter took the visit of Krishṇa for an invasion of his territory. Enraged, he challenged Krishṇa in a battle and met his doom (Krishṇa killed Śrigāla with his *chakra*). On Śrigāla's death Krishṇa installed his son, Śakradeva on the throne.

Another important incident of Krishṇa's life to be mentioned here is the Rukmiṇī *Svyaṁvara*. When it was reported to Krishṇa, that a large number of princes had assembled at Kuṇḍinapura on the occasion of the *Svyaṁvara* of Rukmiṇī, Krishṇa also went there to seek her hand. As Krishṇa was never crowned a king, the other kings, who assembled on the occasion, questioned Krishṇa's claim as a suitor for the hand of Rukmiṇī who was a princess. To remove this difficulty, the princes Kratha and Kaiśika offered their kingdom to Krishṇa. Thus crowned a king, Krishṇa became suitable to seek the hand of Rukmiṇī.

Coming to historical times, the Bhāgavata cult seems to have been well known in Maharashtra as early as the 2nd century B.C. The earliest objective evidence as to the popularity or prevalence of the Bhāgavata cult in this State is provided by the Nānāghāṭ inscription of Queen Nāyanikā (c. 2nd century B.C.) which opens with an invocation to Saṅkarshaṇa, Vāsudeva and other divinities (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. X, App., p. 121). Belonging to the succeeding centuries are certain Western Indian Cave inscriptions containing personal names with Vaishṇavite appellations. A Nāsik Cave inscription ascribable to the reign of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi (106-30) mentions Vishṇu-pālita, who was officer in charge of Govardhana (in the Nāsik district of Maharashtra). (*Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, Nasik Cave inscriptions, No. 4). A Bhaja inscription speaks of a Maharathī, Vishṇudatta, while a Śaka woman, called Vishṇudattā is mentioned in one of the Nasik Cave inscriptions (No. 3). Similarly, a Kanheri Cave inscription of the time of Rājan Māṭharīputra Svāmī Śakasena mentions a merchant called Vishṇunandin, who was an inhabitant of Kalyāṇa, modern Kalyan in the Thana district. Again, the names, such as Rāmadatta, Kaṇha, Vishṇuka, etc. occur in several other early Cave inscriptions of the Maharashtra region in Western India (Lüders, *List of Brāhmī Inscriptions*, Nos. 1001, 1058, 1071, 1137, etc.).

Paunar in the Wardha district of Maharashtra seems to have been an important centre of Vaishṇavism, as is evident from various sources. There was found in Paunar a Vaishṇavite sealing, ascribable to the Śaka-Sātavāhana times (2nd century). It contains a short inscription reading: nama (ḥ) Purushottama (ttamāya). It is quite possible that the sealing in question was offered by a devotee at a Vaishaṇva shrine at Paunar (*Journal, Numismatic Society of India*, No. XXX, 1968, pp. 215 ff).

As to the subsequent history of the popularity of Vaishṇavism in Paunar, mention may be made of certain interesting sculptured panels discovered here. On stylistic grounds, they are ascribable to c. 4th-5th century. One of these panels represents Bharata meeting Rāma at Chitrakūṭa. It shows Sītā, Rāma, Bharata and Lakshmaṇa. Sītā clasps the arm of Rāma, and Bharata holds the left hand of Rāma. Both are happy to meet each

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other. Lakshmaṇa, on the other hand, has turned away his face and 'appears disconsolate'. Rāma and Lakshmaṇa have matted hair while Bharata's hair falls on his shoulders. The figures have characteristics of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka art.

The second panel seems to represent the birth of Rāma. The prominent male figure is that of Daśaratha, holding the child Rāma in his hand. He seems to be overjoyed on the birth of the child for whom he had prayed for a long time. The third panel depicts a scene full of pathos. It shows an old man, sitting on a bed, dejected, supported by a woman. They may be respectively Daśaratha and Kaikeyī, and the scene may be Kaikeyī's asking for two boons from Daśaratha, namely, Rāma should be exiled to forest for fourteen years and Bharata should be declared king of Ayodhyā. The other persons include, as Mirashi has described, the minister Siddhārtha and the family priest Vaśishṭha who came to meet Daśaratha early in the morning on the day of Rāma's *abhisheka*. The charioteer, Sumantra, who according to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, strongly remonstrated with Kaikeyī, is shown behind (V. V. Mirashi, *Studies in Indology*, Vol. II, p. 276 and 277).

Among the other Paunar panels, one shows Sumantra taking Rāma to forest and another, the fight between Sugrīva and Bālī and Rāma shooting Bālī (V. V. Mirashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-280). On the basis of these panels, Mirashi thinks that there was a Rāma temple in the 4th century in Paunar and this temple was built at the instance of the Vākāṭaka dowager queen, Prabhāvatīguptā, daughter of the Gupta king Chandragupta II. Her husband, Rudrasena II, died at an early age and she acted as a regent for about thirteen years for her minor son Divākarasena. When her second son, Pravarasena II, became king, the Vākāṭaka capital was shifted from Nandivardhana to Pravarapura (Paunar). And it appears that Pravarasena II built here a Rāma temple at the instance of her mother. Regarding Prabhāvatīguptā's devotion to Rāma, Mirashi writes: "That she was a devotee of Rāma is already known from two copper-plate grants made by her. One of these made at the feet of the Lord of Rāmagiri (i.e. Rāmachandra) on the twelfth *tithi* of the bright fortnight of Kārttika ekādasī..." Rāmagiri is modern Ramtek near Nagpur. This place is mentioned in the world famous lyric *Meghadūta* of the great Sanskrit poet, Kālidāsa. Another grant of this queen, which, though discovered in distant Poona, belongs to the Hinganghat Tahsil of the Wardha district, was also made at the feet of the Bhagavat, who is no other than the god of Rāmagiri" (Mirashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 280 and 281; see also the Riddhapur copper-plates of Prabhāvatīguptā, beginning with *jitam bhagavatā* (D. C. Sircar, Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilisation, Vol. I, University of Calcutta, 1965, pp. 439 ff).

That her husband, Rudrasena II, had predilections towards Vaishṇavism is indicated in the Chammak inscription of Pravarasena II (D.C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 442), which states that Rudrasena earned great prosperity through the grace of Lord Chakrapāṇi, Vishṇu (see also the Kothuraka Grant of Pravarasena, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVI, p. 160). Further, some plates refer to a shrine with the foot-prints of Vishṇu under the name Mahāpurusha. These facts combined with a sealing of Vaishṇavite import, found on a hill near Parsenoi, 16 miles north of Nagpur, with the legend: *Jitam bhagavatā* in the script of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka age (*Journal, Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XXX, p. 216) would leave no doubt that Vaishṇavism was very popular in the Maharashtra region, during the rule of the Vākāṭakas. This was perhaps largely due to the patronage of the religion by Rudrasena II, Prabhāvatīguptā, Pravarasena II and Prithvisena.

The Vākāṭaka kings were patrons of learning and some of them also composed Prākrit *Kāvyas* and *Subhāsitas*. Sarvasena, the founder of the Vatsagulma Branch, wrote the *Harivijaya* in Prākrit. Ānandavardhana, Hemachandra and several other rhetoricians have referred to him in their works. The subject-matter of the *Harivijaya* was the removal of the Pārijāta tree by Krishṇa from Indra's heaven for the appeasement of Satyabhāmā. Ānandavardhana cited a Prākrit verse from the *Harivijaya* which shows that the work was composed in Mahārashṭrī dialect. Hemachandra has also referred to the *Harivijaya* in several places in his *vivriti* on *Alaṅkārachūḍāmaṇi*.

Like Sarvasena, Pravarasena II of the senior Vākāṭaka family, composed the Prākrit *Kāvya* called *Setubandha*, known also as the *Rāvaṇavaho*. Some scholars, however, say that the author of the *Setubandha* was Pravarasena II of Kashmir, but Kalhaṇa who refers to Pravarasena II of Kashmir never mentions him as the author of the *Setubandha* (V. V. Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. V, pp. Liv-Lvii).

About this period, Vaishṇavism was popular also in Ter (Tagara) in Osmanabad district. As some scholars believe, the brick-built Chaitya or Buddhist temple here was converted later on into that of Trivikrama. Behind the cross wall in the shrine, there are two colossal images, one of Vishṇu and the other of Trivikrama. Trivikrama is seated on a bench with his right leg hanging down. His hands are akimbo. Beneath are Bali, Śukrāchārya and Bali's wife (Cousens, *Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1902-03, pp. 198 and 199). The images of Vishṇu and

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Trivikarma belong, according to Cousens, to the classical period. Cousens thinks that there was a Vishṇu temple in Ter.

About a quarter of a mile to the east of the village of Karusa there is a range of old caves (c. 7th-8th century). The finest of them is the one known as the Mahādeva Cave. The sides of the cave contain large sculptures. Along the south or right wall are mostly Vaishṇava sculptures, while those on the north side are Śaiva. The Vaishṇavite subjects include the boar incarnation of Vishṇu, the contest between Vishṇu and Asuras, the Vāmana Avatāra, the Narasimha Avatāra (Vishṇu tearing out the bowels of Hiraṇya-kaśipu) and Vishṇu represented as a two-armed man holding up the hill of Govardhana over the herds of Vraja...' (Fergusson and Burgess, The *Cave Temples of India*, pp. 420 and 421).

A little to the north of Mahādeva's Cave is a Cave called Lakola's Cave. In its shrine is a four-armed figure of Vishṇu, about 6 feet high. He holds in his hands the *chakra*, club and a round object. To the north of this, is a low-roofed Cave, in the shrine of which is a rock-cut figure of Vishṇu (Fergusson and Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 424).

Besides the above, there are a few caves, namely, those at Patur and Rudreshwar which contain along with other deities Vishṇu and Narasimha figures (Fergusson and Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 428). It may be mentioned here that at Elephanta, which is a predominantly Śaivite centre, was found a mutilated Vishṇu figure (c. 6th century), which has been gifted by the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay to the National Museum, New Delhi.

The Brahmanical Cave at Bhokardan in the Aurangabad district contains a figure of Śesha-śāyī Vishṇu (*Annual Report*, Archaeological Department, Nizam's Dominion, 1936—37, pl. III b).

The sculptures at Ellora caves would show beyond doubt that Vaishṇavism flourished here side by side with Śaivism and Jainism during the subsequent centuries. The right wall of the hall of the Daśāvatāra Cave portrays Krishṇa as Giri-Govardhanadhārī, Varāha, Trivikrama and Śeshaśāyī-Nārāyaṇa and Nrisimha. Krishṇa is shown multi-armed, one of the hands is placed at the waist, another holds a conch and the remaining two lift the Govardhana. Śeshaśāyi-Nārāyaṇa is endowed with four hands holding various attributes. One of his legs is placed on Ananta, and the other on the lap of Lakshmī. Brahmā springs from his lotus navel. Varāha is six-armed; with two of his arms he holds Prithvī and the remaining hold various attributes, like the conch, mace, etc. The left foot of the god is placed on the head of Ādi-Śesha.

Trivikrama is shown with as many as eight hands of which one is in the *sūchī-mudrā*. The attributes held in other hands include a sword, club, arrow, *chakra*, conch, shield and bow. His one leg is raised up. Near his other leg, Vāmana with umbrella is depicted. Nrisimha is also shown multi-armed, with three hands he holds fast the demon, Hiraṇyakaśipu (R. S. Gupte and B. D. Mahajan, *Ajanta, Ellora* and *Aurangabad Caves*, Bombay, 1962, pp. 186 and 187).

Some of these incarnations as well as the figures of Lakshmī, Bhūdevī, etc. occur also in caves, Nos. 14 and 16 side by side with Śaivite deities. In the Cave No. 16 (Kailāsa) Vishṇu is shown in more panels than one.

The Kailāsa represents two important episodes of Krishṇa's early life, namely the subjugation of Kāliya and the lifting of mount Govardhana.

In the Kāliya-mardana scene, Krishṇa places his left foot on the serpent and he holds his tail with one of his hands. As Giri-Govardhanadhārī Krishṇa has four arms. He holds up the mountain with two hands. One left hand is on the left lap and one right hand shows *abhayamudrā* (Southern Gallery, Kailāsa) (Gupte and Mahajan, *op. cit.*, pp. 200 ff).

On the northern wall of the Sabhāmaṇḍapa of Kailāsa are carved in several rows some childhood exploits of Krishṇa and scenes from the *Mahābhārata*. The lower two rows show the birth of Krishṇa in the prison house of Kamsa, the Pūtanā and Bakāsura-vadha and the stealing of butter by Krishṇa. At the top left corner are portrayed Arjuna's penance, his fight with the Kirāta (i.e. Mahādeva in the guise of a hunter) and the winning of the Pāśupata weapon. The third row depicts Abhimanyu entering the *chakravyūha* and fighting singlehanded against seven great warriors. The fourth and fifth rows show respectively Krishṇa with Arjuna and Krishṇa and Pāṇḍavas.

The southern wall of the Sabhā Maṇḍapa is devoted to the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes, including Rāma's departure from Ayodhyā, Bharata meeting Rāma and persuading him to return to Ayodhyā, Sūrpanakhā approaching Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, *Sītāharaṇa* (abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa), Hanumān and Hanumān's exploits in Lanka, and Sītā in Aśoka-vana, etc. (Gupte and Mahajan, *op. cit.*, pp. 208 and 209).

There are a number of other temples and sculptures as well as some epigraphical records, throwing light on the history of Vaishṇavism in Maharashtra during the early and late medieval periods. The Manor plates of Vinayāditya, Śaka 613=691 A.D. and Rayagad plates of Vijayāditya, Śaka 625=703 A.D. open with an invocation to Vishṇu in

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his Varāha form (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 18 and Vol. X, pp. 14 and 15).

Professor S. B. Deo of the Deccan College, Research Institute, Poona informs me that at Panhal-kaji, Ratnagiri district, there is a large complex of caves some of which may contain Vaishṇavite panels of c. 8th century.

The Karhad plates of the Rāshṭrakūṭa Krishṇa, Śaka 880=958 A.D. begin with a verse in honour of Vishṇu, the enemy of Mura, followed by a praise in honour of Śiva (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, p. 278). The Rāshṭrakūṭas paid obeisance, as is known, both to Vishṇu and Śiva. Again the Rāshṭrakūta charters of Krishṇa III from Chinchani (Thana district), ascribable to the middle of the 10th century, speak of the god Bhillamāla-deva, also called Madhusūdana, worshipped at an unspecified place (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 56 ff).

During the rule of the Yādavas, Vaishṇavism continued in popularity though Śaivism occupied a predominant place in the religious history of the people. The Methi inscription, Śaka 1176 or 1254 A.D. which is engraved on the lintel of the entrance to the central hall of the Vishṇu temple near Hariba's well, popularly known as the Ananta Śayana temple opens with an invocation to Vāsudeva (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 313-19). The Nandgaon inscription of Yādava Krishṇa was issued Śaka 1177 or 1255 A. D. According to the *Līlācharitra*, an old Marathi biography of Chakradhara, the founder of the Mahānubhava sect, Krishṇa (the Yādava king) had gone as far as Lonar in the Buldana district of Berar to meet Chakradhara in the Śaka year 1778, i.e.1256 only two years after the date of the present record (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 9 and 10). There are some Yādava plates which begins with an invocation of Vishṇu in his Varāhāvatāra (boar incarnation).

The Yādavas adopted Garuḍa as an emblem on the royal standards and scenes. They trace their origin from Vishṇu. All this would show that Vaishṇavism was the personal religion of the Yādava rulers. During their times, an unprecedented *bhakti* movement swept the whole of their kingdom. Chakradhara, the founder of the Mahānubhāva sect was a contemporary of Yādava Rāmchandra whose Rāmtek inscription (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXV, pp. 7 ff) provides a description of various temples and tīrthas on the hill of Rāmtek. These include the temples of Ghaṇṭeśvara, Sudheśvara, Kedāra and many others. Rāmachandradeva is said to have built a golden temple of Śārṅgapāṇi at Varanasi (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXV, p. 207).

Besides the shrines mentioned above, we may refer to a few more (c. 1000-1350 A.D.) containing Vaishṇavite sculptures, along with other subjects. Cousens has observed the presence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes among the sculptures on the north side of the Aeshvar temple (11th-12th century) at Sinnar in the Nasik district. On the dedicatory block of the shrine door is represented Gajalakshmī and immediately above this is Vishṇu Śeshaśāyi. The inner faces of the antechamber pilasters contain Brahmā and Vishṇu on the south and north respectively. The figures of Vishṇu and his Avatāras occur among the sculptures of the Ambarnath temple, about 4 miles south-east of Klayan (Thana district). This temple was built in 1060 A.D.

The temple No. 1 (late 11th century) at Balsane is an instance of a triple shrine type in the Deccan. Of the two main shrines, one was dedicated to Vishṇu, and the other to Śiva.

The temple at Vaghili (c. 1069 A.D.), in the Jalgaon district, was originally dedicated to Śiva but it was later on appropriated by the Mahānubhavas and came to be known as the temple of Krishṇa. The ceiling of the temple depicts Krishṇa and Gopīs (*New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX, pp. 256 ff).

At Methi in the Dhule district, there are several temples of which two are of Lakshmī and Nārāyaṇa. They are built side by side as the temples of Viṭhobā and Rakhamāī at Shrigonde in the Ahmednagar district. The temple of Lakshmī stands on the proper left of Nārāyaṇa These temples were built about 1254 A.D. The shrine of the Nārāyaṇa temple contains an image of Vishṇu, while that of Lakshmī temple has a Lakshmī image (*Ibid.*, p. 246).

The open Maṇḍapa of the temple of Nārāyaṇa has the figures of Varāha and Narasimha on the north and the south niche respectively. "The *Janghā* of the walls of both the temples bear large figures consisting of dancing men and women, and in the case of the temple of Nārāyaṇa, various forms of Vishṇu and in the case of the temple of Lakshmī various representations of the same goddess. In each case there are five niches in the exterior, three on the three principal faces of the shrine and two on the walls of the antechamber. The sculptures in these and in the *Janghā* are purely Vaishṇava... This is quite unique, since in other Vaishṇava temples we do get Śaiva images as we do Vaishṇava on Śaiva temples though they are assigned to subordinate positions. The principal niches of the Nārāyaṇa temple contain images of Vishṇu whereas those of the Lakshmī temple hold images of Lakshmī." (A. V. Naik, "Structural Remains of the

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Deccan", *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX, July-December, 1947, pp. 248 and 249).

At Anjaneri, a village in the Nasik district there are remains of about sixteen temples. Of these, nos. 8 and 9 were dedicated to Vishṇu. The image of Garuḍa is engraved on the dado of their garbhagrihas. Śiva, Vishṇu and Brahmā (Vishṇu in the middle) are carved one the shrine door of the temple, No. 8. These temples on stylistic grounds can be attributed to c. 1150 (A. V. Naik, *op. cit.*, p. 249).

The temple, No. 5 at Balsane, as Cousens remarked was probably a Vaishṇava temple, the main shrine containing an image of Vishṇu and ten smaller ones around the hall ten avatāras of Vishṇu. The temple faces north and in the main shrine, at present, is an image said to be of Kalkin. This temple belongs to c.1150-1300 A.D. (*op. cit.*, p. 262).

One the *Jaṅghā* (band) of the Changdev temple occur images representing different forms of Vishṇu. 'The central panels on the three principal faces of the shrine-walls have a group of sculptures consisting of a two-handed male figure and a female attendant on either side of them. These, according to Cousens, may well represent Krishṇa and his Gopis. Thus the different forms of Vishṇu in the *Jaṅghā* and these figures would show that the temple was dedicated to Vishṇu (A. V. Naik, *op. cit.*, p. 263).

The Lakshmī Nārāyaṇa temple at Pedgaon faces the west. It was dedicated since its erection to Vishṇu, and so, the principal niches contain Vaishṇava images. Again, the horizontal row of the rectangular pilasters of the Mandovara, show among others, Lakshmī and some of the 24 forms of Vishṇu as well as other images of his ten avatāras (A. V. Naik, *op. cit.*, p. 265).

The Bhuleshvar temple near Yavat is also of great interest to us. The horizontal section of the 'dwarf-wall' of its maṇḍapa contain various scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

The temple at Lonar was constructed for Sūrya as is evident from the presence of its image, on its exterior. It is locally known as Daitya-sūdana from its connection with the story of Lavaṇāsura or Loṇāsura. Lavaṇāsura was eventually killed by Vishṇu in his incarnation of Daitya-sūdana (A. V. Naik, *op. cit.*, p. 299). This temple is one of the best extant temples of the medieval architecture in Berar.

One niche of the Maṇḍapa of Ramling temple at Gursal contains an original image of Śeshaśāyī.

In the centre of one of the doorways of the temple at Velapur, there is an image of Gaja-Lakshmī, while the corresponding position of the door opposite has been taken up by an image of Garuḍa. The temple is known at present by the name of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa and in view of the door lintel images it appears that it was originally dedicated to Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa.

Among the temples from the Vidarbha are the Daśāvatāra temple in Markandi in the Chanda district and the Vishṇu temple at Satgaon in the Buldhana district deserve our attention. The Daśāvatāra temple contains at present only some of the ten incarnations of Vishṇu, such as Buddha, Krishṇa, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Nrisimha, Bhūvarāha and Kūrma, though the temple as the name would indicate was intended originally to house all the ten incarnations (S. B. Deo, *Markandi Temples*, Nagpur University, Nagpur, 1973, pp. 13 and 14).

The history of medieval Vaishṇavism in Maharashtra centres round the Krishṇa worship, the pioneers of which were Chakradhara and Jñāneśvara. The singleminded devotion of these poet-saints to Krishṇa constitute a unique chapter in the religious history of Maharashtra. This movement had a widespread appeal and it attracted the minds of the masses. While emphasising the importance of *bhakti*, the reformers preached the equality of all in the eye of God and they were against caste-distinctions.

The Mahānubhava sect, the strong foundation of which was laid down by Chakradhara, regarded Krishṇa as their chief deity. The first centre of the Mahānubhava activities was in Berar. The adherents of this sect did not believe in caste-distinctions.

The pioneer of this sect was Govindaprabhu who was born in a village called Riddhapur of Berar in Samvat 1245 (1188). He was indifferent to worldly pleasures since his childhood. He initiated Chakradhara to his own doctrine who by his missionary zeal and preaching, enlarged the activities of this sect and he is popularly known as the founder of this sect. His father was Visaladeva, who was a minister in the court of Malladeva, king of Broach.

Chakradhara's original name was Haripāla. After his father's death he ruled for some time as the king of Broach but soon he had a divine call. He received initiation from Govindaprabhu as mentioned above.

Though Chakradhara originally belonged to Gujarat, his main centre of activities was in Maharashtra. He preached in Marathi and the writings of some of his followers enriched this language.

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Chakradhara did not write any book for the guidance of his followers. But his doctrines as he preached were collected by his disciples which formed the basis of the *Līlācharitra* by Mahīndra Vyāsa and of the *Sidhānta-sūtra-pāṭha* by Keśavarāja Sūri. *The Siddhānta-sūtra-pāṭha* is the earliest text of the Mahānubhavas. The other books of this sect are *Śiśupālavadha, Ekādaśaskandha, Vatsaharaṇa, Rukmiṇī Svayamvara, Jñānaprabodha, Sahyādrivarṇana, Riddhipuravarṇana*, etc. Some of them may be discused below.

(For the history of the Mahānubhavas one may consult Krishṇalal Sarsode, *Marāṭhī Sāhitya kā Itihāsa*, Prayag, pp. 13-20 and G.C. Bhate, *History of Modern Marāṭhī Literature*, Poona, 1939, pp. 14 ff.).

Kavīśvara Bhāskara is the author of the *Śiśupālabadha* (1330 V. S. = 1273 A. D.). In point of style, it is one of the finest compositions in Marathi literature. The procession of the cavalry of Śrī Krishṇa against Śiśupāla is thus described in it.

"Uṭhavile asivārū/jaise
kālakūṭā che dhudhukāra
taise pāyā che mogarū/Nigatātī
nāte pralayāni che dhāvaṇen
Kīm kālānche āmantraṇen
deyāvayā nigāle bhī bhaṇen
Śiśupālā sī." (Krishṇalal Sarsode,
op. cit., p. 16).

The horsemen of Lord Krishṇa rose in such a spirited way that it appeared to be a thunder of the Kālakūṭa poison. The march of footmen made it appear as if the clouds of destruction of the universe were running to deliver the message or invitation of death to Śiśupāla.

The second work of Bhāskara was *Rukmiṇī Svyamvara*. His *Ekādaśaskandha* is a sort of commentary of the 11th *Skandha* of the *Bhāgavata*. It was written in 1333 Samvat. His most prominent work is the *Krishṇacharitra*, which seems to be the first book in prose in Marathi literature (*Ibid*).

Vatsaharaṇa by Dāmodara-paṇḍita is based upon the same episode of the *Bhāgavata*. It is a beautiful composition from the point of view of style and rhetorics. He can be compared with Raskhan of Hindi literature (*Ibid.*, p. 18).

The Mahānubhava sect spread far and wide. It received the patronage of the Yādava rulers of Devagiri. Even after the fall of the Devagiri dynasty and the establishment of Muhammadan rule in Maharashtra the Mahānubhava sect obtained the royal favour as they were regarded as non-idolatrous by the Muhammadan rulers.

The greatest saint and propagator of the *Bhakti* movement in Maharashtra was Jñāneśvara who was born in 1275 A. D. He lived only for twenty-two years. During the brief span of his life he composed several invaluable books which reveal his intense devotion to Krishṇa and his great erudition. He was a devotee, poet and philosopher, all in one. Among his works, the following are well known: 1. *Jñāneśvarī*, also called *Bhāvārthadīpikā*, 2. *Amritānubhava*, 3. *Chānga-deva praśasti*. 4. *Haripāṭha*, and 5. Miscellaneous *Abhaṅgas*.

The *Jñāneśvarī* is a sort of commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. But it has acquired a new dimension because of the author's original outlook, mastery over the abstruse metaphysics, and wonderful power of giving illustrations. It provided the srength of the new Vārakārī sect. His poetic thoughts and imageries are superb.

Jñānesvara tells us that any intense feeling, whether of extreme love or fear or hatred, leads us to God, and gives the following illustrations. "These cowherd women thought about Me as a husband, and they reached My form. Kamsa, the great demon, entertained mortal fear about me, and he reached Me. Śiśupāla conceived intense hatred towards me, and he became one with Me. The Yādavas loved Me as their relative, Vasudeva loved Me as a child, Nārada, Dhruva, Akrūra, Śuka and Sanatkumāra loved Me as the supreme object of devotion and they all reached Me. I am indeed the sole and to be reached. One may reach Me by any means whatsoever either by devotion or by sexual love or dispassion or hatred." (*Jñāneśvarī*, IX, 465-470; R. D. Ranade, *Mysticism in Maharashtra*, Poona, 1933, p. 109).

Jñāneśvara says that the devotee is dearer to god than anything else. "That Secret which He did not impart to His father Vasudeva, nor to His mother Devakī, nor even to His brother Balibhadra, Krishṇa imparted to His devotee, Arjuna. Even His wife, Laxmī, who was in such near presence to Him, could not enjoy the happiness of His love." (R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 129). Krishṇa is so gracious to his devotee that he accepts with great joy whatever is offered to Him by His devotee. "With a love incomparable when My devotee offers to Me a fruit of any tree whatsoever, or even brings it before Me, I catch hold of it with both My hands, and partake of it without even plucking it from its stem. When My devotee offers to me a flower by devotion, I should as a matter of fact, smell it; but I forget smelling, and begin to eat it..." (R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 131).

The *Jñāneśvarī* is full of such imageries, bringing home to us various aspects of the *bhakti* which provides an easy and sure way

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to salvation. Jñāneśvara glorifies the *Gītā* more than the *Vedas*. He says in his inimitable language: The *Vedas* are rich but miserly by nature, for only the people of the first three Varṇas are entitled to hear them. To me it appears that to make good this miserliness, the *Vedas* had to undergo a second birth in the form of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

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Of the contemporaries of Nāmadeva, the names of Gora, the potter, Narahari, the goldsmith, Chokha, the untouchable, Janābāī, the maid, Sena, the barber and Kanhopatra, the dancing girl, may be mentioned. All of them under the influence of the teachings of Jñānadeva and Nāmadeva became filled with devotion to Viṭhobā. Though they belonged to lower castes, they were held in high esteem because of their spiritual vision, humility and devotion to Lord Pāṇḍuraṅga. This was the age which witnessed the 'spiritual democracy all round' in Maharashtra (R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-210).

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Chakradhara did not write any book for the guidance of his followers. But his doctrines as he preached were collected by his disciples which formed the basis of the *Līlācharitra* by Mahīndra Vyāsa and of the *Sidhānta-sūtra-pāṭha* by Keśavarāja Sūri. *The Siddhānta-sūtra-pāṭha* is the earliest text of the Mahānubhavas. The other books of this sect are *Śiśupālavadha*, *Ekādaśaskandha*, *Vatsaharaṇa*, *Rukmiṇī Svayamvara*, *Jñānaprabodha*, *Sahyādrivarṇana*, *Riddhipuravarṇana*, etc. Some of them may be discused below.

(For the history of the Mahānubhavas one may consult Krishṇalal Sarsode, *Marāṭhī Sāhitya kā Itihāsa*, Prayag, pp. 13-20 and G.C. Bhate, *History of Modern Marāṭhī Literature*, Poona, 1939, pp. 14 ff.).

Kavīśvara Bhāskara is the author of the *Śiśupālabadha* (1330 V. S. = 1273 A. D.). In point of style, it is one of the finest compositions in Marathi literature. The procession of the cavalry of Śrī Krishṇa against Śiśupāla is thus described in it.

"Uṭhavile asivārū/jaise
kālakūṭā che dhudhukāra
taise pāyā che mogarū/Nigatātī
nāte pralayāni che dhāvaṇen
Kīm kālānche āmantraṇen
deyāvayā nigāle bhī bhaṇen
Śiśupālā sī." (Krishṇalal Sarsode, *op. cit.*, p. 16).

The horsemen of Lord Krishṇa rose in such a spirited way that it appeared to be a thunder of the Kālakūṭa poison. The march of footmen made it appear as if the clouds of destruction of the universe were running to deliver the message or invitation of death to Śiśupāla.

The second work of Bhāskara was *Rukmiṇī Svyamvara*. His *Ekādaśaskandha* is a sort of commentary of the 11th *Skandha* of the *Bhāgavata*. It was written in 1333 Samvat. His most prominent work is the *Krishṇacharitra*, which seems to be the first book in prose in Marathi literature (*Ibid*).

Vatsaharaṇa by Dāmodara-paṇḍita is based upon the same episode of the *Bhāgavata*. It is a beautiful composition from the point of view of style and rhetorics. He can be compared with Raskhan of Hindi literature (*Ibid.*, p. 18).

The Mahānubhava sect spread far and wide. It received the patronage of the Yādava rulers of Devagiri. Even after the fall of the Devagiri dynasty and the establishment of Muhammadan rule in Maharashtra the Mahānubhava sect obtained the royal favour as they were regarded as non-idolatrous by the Muhammadan rulers.

The greatest saint and propagator of the *Bhakti* movement in Maharashtra was Jñāneśvara who was born in 1275 A. D. He lived only for twenty-two years. During the brief span of his life he composed several invaluable books which reveal his intense devotion to Krishṇa and his great erudition. He was a devotee, poet and philosopher, all in one. Among his works, the following are well known: 1. *Jñāneśvarī*, also called *Bhāvārthadīpikā*, 2. *Amritānubhava*, 3. *Chānga-deva prasasti*, 4. *Haripāṭha*, and 5. Miscellaneous *Abhaṅgas*.

The *Jñāneśvarī* is a sort of commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. But it has acquired a new dimension because of the author's original outlook, mastery over the abstruse metaphysics, and wonderful power of giving illustrations. It provided the srength of the new Vārakārī sect. His poetic thoughts and imageries are superb.

Jñānesvara tells us that any intense feeling, whether of extreme love or fear or hatred, leads us to God, and gives the following illustrations. "These cowherd women thought about Me as a husband, and they reached My form. Kamsa, the great demon, entertained mortal fear about me, and he reached Me. Śiśupāla conceived intense hatred towards me, and he became one with Me. The Yādavas loved Me as their relative, Vasudeva loved Me as a child, Nārada, Dhruva, Akrūra, Śuka and Sanatkumāra loved Me as the supreme object of devotion and they all reached Me. I am indeed the sole and to be reached. One may reach Me by any means whatsoever either by devotion or by sexual love or dispassion or hatred." (*Jñāneśvarī*, IX, 465-470; R. D. Ranade, *Mysticism in Maharashtra*, Poona, 1933, p. 109).

Jñāneśvara says that the devotee is dearer to god than anything else. "That Secret which He did not impart to His father Vasudeva, nor to His mother Devakī, nor even to His brother Balibhadra, Krishṇa imparted to His devotee, Arjuna. Even His wife, Laxmī, who was in such near presence to Him, could not enjoy the happiness of His love." (R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 129). Krishṇa is so gracious to his devotee that he accepts with great joy whatever is offered to Him by His devotee. "With a love incomparable when My devotee offers to Me a fruit of any tree whatsoever, or even brings it before Me, I catch hold of it with both My hands, and partake of it without even plucking it from its stem. When My devotee offers to me a flower by devotion, I should as a matter of fact, smell it; but I forget smelling, and begin to eat it..." (R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 131).

The *Jñāneśvarī* is full of such imageries, bringing home to us various aspects of the *bhakti* which provides an easy and sure way

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the strongest pillars of the Maharashtra mysticism.

Ekanātha belonged to a Desastha Brāhmaṇa family of Paithan. His great grandfather, Bhānudāsa brought back from Hampi, the image of Viṭṭhala which was taken there by Krishṇadeva-Rāya from Pandharpur. Pandharpur at that time faced Muslim ravages and it is quite possible that to save the idol from being desecrated by the Muhammadans, Krishṇadeva-Rāya carried the idol to Hampi for its safety. Whatever it may be, the bringing back of the image by Bhānudāsa is considered a great achievement.

Ekanātha seems to have lived from 1533 to 1599 A. D. He lost his parents, Sūryanārāyāṇa and Rukmiṇībāī, in his early childhood. He grew up under the care of his grandfather and grandmother. He was endowed with great intelligence and had a devotional temperament from the very beginning. While still very young, he came to Devagadh and received spiritual training from Janārdanapanth who was a great Bhakta and Karmayogī. He lived with the teacher for six years and read with him very carefully Jñāneśvara's *Amritānubhava* and *Jñāneśvarī*. He performed meditation and attained spiritual vision.

Once when Janārdanaśvāmī was engaged in meditation, Devagadh was attacked by the Muhammadans. Ekanātha put on the coat of mail of Janārdanāśvāmī, and fought the enemy successfully. He had great regards for Janārdanaśvāmī as Jñāneśvara had for his spiritual teacher, Nivrittinātha.

Ekanātha left behind him a voluminous literary work. His commentary on the *Ekādaśaskandha* of the *Bhāgavata* is of great importance. His *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa* as well as *Rukmiṇī-vivāha* depicting the very pure love of Rukmiṇī for Krishṇa and vice-versa, and his *Abhaṅgas* are also a great contribution to Marathi literature. Ekanātha was not only a great saint but also a poet of very high order. To Ekanātha Bhakti consisted in recognising divine nature in all beings. God is always eager to save his Bhaktas. He came to the succour of Draupadī when a host of Brāhmaṇas came to ask for dinner. He saved Arjuna from Bhagadatta's arrows. Prahlāda was saved by Him on land and in water and on fire. *Ekanāthī Bhāgavata* was greatly influenced by the *Jñāneśvarī* both in thoughts and similies. In tracing the history and greatness of the *Bhāgavata* Ekanātha says: *Śrī Bhāgavata* is a great field. Brahmā was the first to obtain the seed. Nārada was its chief proprietor. And it was he who did this wonderful work of sowing seed. Vyāsa secured protection for the field by erecting ten bunds about it and the result was the unusually excellent crop of divine bliss. Śuka worked as a watchman to guard the crops: with simply discharging the sling of god's name, he made the sin-birds fly away. Uddhava thrashed the ears, heaped them together in the form of the 11th *Skandha* and winnowing the corn separated the grains in the form of the weighty words of Śrī Krishṇa. From these were very skilfully prepared dishes with an immortal flavour. Parīkshit succeeded Uddhava. He broke with the world to listen to the *Bhāgavata* from the lips of Śukadeva, and obtained divine bliss. Following in his footsteps, Śrīdhara illuminated the hidden meaning of the *Bhāgavata* in his *Bhāvārthadīpikā* and brought blissful peace for himself. The favourite fly of Janārdana, namely, Ekanātha, with the two wings of the Marathi dialect, flew straight upon that dish, and enjoyed it to its heart's content, as it was left there unmolested by any one. Or, otherwise, it might be said that Janārdana's favourite cat happened to see the delicious preparations through the light of the *Bhāvārthadīpikā*. Smelling the dish to be pure and delicious, it ventured and approached the plates. When it mewed, the merciful Saints were pleased to offer to it a morsel of the remnants of their dish. The favourite cat of Janārdana was simply overjoyed to lick the unwashed vessels of these Saints, and it enjoyed the dish as a heavenly ambrosia" (*Ekanāthī Bhāgavata* XXXI, 443-454; Ranade, *op. cit.*, pp. 231 and 232).

The Marathi literature was very much enriched by Ekanātha's composition as it was done by Jñāneśvara's. Ekanātha's grandson, Mukteśvara also was well versed in Sanskrit and Marathi and he composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* early in his youth. It was followed by his *Māhābhārāta* which is a much better composition than his earlier work, i.e. the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He is said to have also written an exposition of the *Bhagavadgītā*. But this book is not extant now. Among the minor poets who wrote on the *Bhāgavata* theme mention may be made of Ramāvallabhadāsa and Sivakalyāṇa and a few others. Ramāvallabhadāsa wrote an exposition of the *Bhagavadagītā*, and *Bhāgavata*. But his compositions were not of a high order. Sivakalyāṇa wrote a great poem on the 10th chapter of the *Bhāgavata* dealing with Krishṇa's amorous dalliances with the Gopīs (K. Sarsode. *op. cit.*, p. 126).

The greatest of Marathi poets is Sant Tukārāma. His poetry (*Abhaṅgas*) was the outpouring of his devotional heart and his influence over the men of his time was tremendous. His ancestors were devotees of Viṭṭhala of Pandharpur. They built a temple for the god at Dehu.

Tukārāma was born in Dehu near Poona in 1598 A. D. He belonged to the farmer's caste. He was a householder and married two wives.

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He was engaged in a small trade in which he ultimately suffered irreparable loss. His wife Rakhumābāī and son Santu died for want of food. But his sufferings and adversities in life did not shake his devotion to god. Rather, the sufferings made him more and more devoted to the worship of Viṭṭhala. Tukārāma had great respects for Jñāneśvara but he was more akin to Nāmadeva in his emotional approach to god. Like Nāmadeva, he spent his time mostly in *Kīrtana* which was soul-enthralling. A large band of disciples gathered round him and they had great admiration for this distinguished saint, who lost himself in meditation on god.

Tukārāma committed to memory both the *Jñāneśvarī* and the *Ekanāthī Bhāgavata*. He said that other religious courses are difficult to perform in the Kali age, and only the path of *Bhakti* is easy to the people. Tukārām's mystic devotion was very great. Viṭṭhala was to him more real than the people that surrounded him. He considered himself to be inseparable from Viṭṭhala. He tells us: "while we are contemplating on god, both body and mind are entirely transferred."

What mattered to Tukārāma was not knowledge by itself. Knowledge without devotion cannot take one to Brahman. What one needs is spiritual realisation. He said, "Remember god's name with all speed and then god cannot hold himself back. He will hasten as he did for the sake of Draupadī and will come ahead of his swift-winged eagle. He cannot contain his love and will run to the devotee's help" (Ranade, *op. cit.*, p. 346).

Another great saint of Maharashtra was Rāmadāsa. He was born in 1608 A. D. He left home when he was quite young. He practised severe penance lasting for about twelve years. It is said that Rāma appeared before him and initiated him. He wandered from place to place and preached the worship of Rāma to the people.

He came to Pandharpur in 1649 and it is quite possible that he met Tukārāma here. In 1650 he came to Parali near Satara. Sivaji met him and was impressed by his personality. He perhaps became his disciple in 1672 A.D.

There are several literary works to Rāmadāsa's credit but the *Dāsabodha* is the greatest of them. It contains his thoughts and utterances. He said that God could be known only through spiritual vision. 'We should see him and abide in him. This God is indeed the innerself' (Ranade *op. cit.*, p. 381).

There arose also later in Maharashtra many saints devoted to Vaishṇava faith. Vāmana Paṇḍit (18th century) who studied Sanskrit in his early days turned to Marathi in his later years. Very soon he became proficient in the Marathi language and translated the *Bhagavadgītā* into fine and flowing Marathi which is known as *Samaślokīgītā*. Soon after he took up a bigger work and wrote the exposition of the *Bhagavadgītā*, emulating the example of Jñāneśvara. This work is known as *Yathārthadīpikā* as Jñāneśvarī is known as *Bhāvārthadīpika*. Vāmana Paṇḍit wrote also some popular poems and some incidents on Krishṇa's life. Morapantha was a good poet and wrote stories based upon the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* for the instruction of young people.

That Vaishṇavism continued to be popular in Maharashtra is evident from also other sources.

At Shanwarwada in Poona city 'the pavement of the ground floor inside the gateway was renewed at places, and a fine series of fresco-paintings on the walls of the ground floor was found after the removal of coats of whitewash applied over these paintings'. The frescos belong to the early 19th century and possess a marked affinity to the Rajput School of Paintings. On the northern wall of the southern portion of the main gate we find Vishṇu lying on Śesha, Gaṇeśa and Brahmā and on the side walls ten incarnations of Vishṇu and some incidents from Krishṇa's life (*Annual Report*, Archaeological survey of India, 1919-1920, p. 13).

There are some Garuḍa Khambas at Pauni, 52 miles south-east of Nagpur in Maharashtra. These votive pillars are found in different parts of the town. They are raised on a brick platform and are usually situated in the precincts of the temples. These pillars contain sculptured niches on the four faces. The style of the sculptures is not of a very high order, This can be ascribed to the post-Shahjahan period or the late Maratha period. There are sculptural representations on each face, which are mostly of Vaishṇavite affiliations. The east face contains representations of four-armed Gaṇapati, Matysa, four-armed, with the attributes, lotus, discus, conch and mace, four-armed Kūrma and probably Varāha with various attributes, and Krishṇa and Arjuna drawn in a crude manner representing perhaps the incident of Lord revealing the *Gītā* to Arjuna.

The southern face contains Hanumān, Garuḍa, Krishṇa, (four-armed playing on flute), Krishṇa stealing butter from a pot while Rādhā or Yaśodā shown churning the butter and a few other scenes difficult to identify. The western face contains the figures of Sarasvatī, Balarāma, Rāma with Sītā and two male figures seated in yoga-paṭṭāsana.

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On the northern face are shown Vishṇu, Vāmana, and Nrisimha besides Brahmā and Śiva, etc. It is thus seen that in Pauni pillars the Vaishṇava sculptures dominate in variety and quantity. All the incarnations, such as the fish, tortoise, boar, man-lion, dwarf, Parasurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Krishṇa and Kalkin are to be seen on the faces of the pillars.

Such pillars are also found in different other parts of Vidarbha (S. B. Deo, Archaeological Congress and Seminar Papers, Nagpur, 1972, pp. 13 ff).

GUJARAT

THE major part of Krishṇa's life was spent in Dvārakā in Saurāshṭra. Krishṇa killed Kamsa and put an end to his tyranny; yet he could not stay in Mathura for long. Jarāsandha, to avenge the death of his son-in-law (i.e. Kamsa), made repeated attacks on Mathura and forced Krishṇa to abandon Mathura and migrate to the west. The *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas* state that Krishṇa leaving Mathura, founded the city of Dvārakā, and settled there with his kinsmen, the Yādavas. This seems to be the second migration of the Yādavas.

The Yādavas were divided into various septs, such as the Vītihotras, the Haihayas, and the Sāttvatas. The Sāttvatas, again, were divided into several branches, namely, the Devavriddhas, Andhakas, Bhojas and Vrishṇis. The Sāttvatas had to leave the land of Kuru-Pañchālas on account of the raid of Bharatas and it is quite possible that some of the Yādavas came to Gujarat earlier than Krishṇa's time, and this might be also one of the reasons why Krishṇa chose to come to Dvārakā and settle there (M. R. Majmudar, *Chronology of Gujarat*, Baroda, 1960, pp.22ff).

The flowering of Krishṇa's career took place in Dvārakā and here he could take a long-range view of the Indian politics and prevailing social evils. He was determined now to tackle firmly the atrocious kings and their allies, who were actuated by the policy of self-aggrandisement.

The *Harivaṁśa* and the *Purāṇas* describe that Viśvakarmā built the city of Dvārakā with many palaces and places of worship for Krishṇa. But very few remains of these have survived apparently because of the calamity that Dvārakā was submerged under water after Krishṇa's departure for heavenly abode. Even the location of the ancient city of Dvārakā is a matter of great dispute among the scholars and historians. Some scholars have sought to identify Krishṇa's Dvārakā with the modern Dvārakā, situated in ancient Okhāmaṇḍala, some with Junagadh or ancient Girinagar and some with Mūla-Dvārakā, a small island, about 22 miles from Prabhāsa Pātan (H.D. Sankalia, *Dvaraka in Literature and Archaeology, Excavations at Dvaraka* by Z.A. Ansari and M. S. Mate, Poona, 1966, pp. 1 ff). According to the *Harivaṁśa*, the site of Dvārakā was in Kuśasthalī, and as the land available for building the city was inadequate, Krishṇa reclaimed some land from the sea, which seems to corroborate the statement of the *Musala Parva* that Krishṇa's Dvārakā was near the sea.

According to Pusalkar, Sankalia and Jayantilal Thakar, it is the modern Dvārakā which satisfies best the claim of representing the ancient site of Dvārakā (*Ibid.*, pp. 12 and 13). Firstly, in and around Dvārakā are numerous places and temples. Here where the Gomatī meets the sea, were built on the ancient rock surface the temples of Indra, Varuṇa, Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa and a little later the famous temple of Krishṇa as lord of Dvārakā, "Dvārakādhīśa". This as well as the other temples as they stand today are admittedly of a later date, but it is very likely that they stand on the ruins of ancient temples, probably of identical deities (*Ibid.*, p. 10).

The Palitana plates of Sāmanta Simhāditya, dated 574 A.D., refer to Dvārakā as the capital of the Western coast of Saurāshṭra and states that Krishṇa lived here. This clearly shows that Krishṇa's association with Dvārakā is not only mentioned in the *Harivaṁśa* and *Purāṇas* but also in epigraphical records (*Epigraphia Indica.*, Vol.XI, pp. 16 and 18 and 19).

Though Dvārakā was the capital of Krishṇa, the earliest extant evidence to show the prevalence of the Vishṇu-Krishṇa cult in Gujarat is provided by the Traikūṭaka coins of Dharasena and Vyāghrasena and the Junagadh rock inscription of Skandagupta.

The earliest king of the Traikūṭaka dynasty was Indradatta, who flourished about 415-440. His son Dharasena (456-57) according to his Pardi plates (Pardi is in Surat district) performed an Aśvamedha sacrifice and called himself "Bhagavatpāda-karmakara", i.e. a servant of the feet of

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Krishna dances with young damsels, Gita-Govinda Series, Guler Style, 1760-1765, after plate II, Kangra paintings of the Gita-Govinda by Dr. M. S. Randhawa.

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Bhagavat (M. R. Majmudar, *op. cit.*, pp. 118 and 119). Dharasena's son Vyāghrasena also adopted the same epithet, Bhagavat pāda-karmakāra (see Surat Plates of Vyāghrasena, Kalachuri year, 241, Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. IV, Part I, pp. 25 ff). Both Dharasena and Vyāghrasena are also called Parama-Vaishṇava in their coin legends (Rapson, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Andhra* Dynasty, etc., *CLXII*). The Traikūṭakas ruled south of Tāpti, contemporaneously with Skandagupta.

The Junagadh Rock Inscription of Skandagupta (455-458) is an important Vaishṇavite document and begins with an invocation to Vishṇu. Further, it states that he appointed Parṇadatta as Governor of Saurāshṭra.

As Governor of Saurāshṭra, Parṇadatta on his turn appointed his son, Chakrapālita to govern the country. Chakrapālita was devoted to Govinda and caused to be built at a great expenditure a temple in honour of Chakrabhirt (Vishṇu), the bearer of discus, who became 'incarnate by the exercise of his free will'.

Now, comes chronologically the history of the Valabhi kings. Of all the Valabhi rulers, Dhruvasena (519-549) alone was a follower of Vaishṇavism. The Maliya copper-plate Inscription of Dharasena II (Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, p. 168) refers to Dhruvasena as a Bhāgavata or Vaishṇava. Other Valabhi or Maitraka rulers except Dharapaṭṭa (550), who was a devotee of the sun, were champions of Śaivism.

The Palitana plates of Sihmāditya of 574 (Hultzsch, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XI, p. 18) are of great interest with regard to the history of Vaishṇavism in Gujarat during the Maitraka period, as stated above. It describes Gārulaka Simhāditya's father Varāhadāsa (who conquered Dvārakā) as valorous as Krishṇa. This record as already mentioned points to Krishṇa's association with Dvārakā without any doubt.

Dr. R. N. Mehta of Baroda informed me of the existence of a copper-plate of Toramāṇa, year 3 (in the collection of the M.S. University, Baroda), which speaks of a Vaishṇava temple built near Sanjanapallika indentified with Sanjeli, Taluk Jhaloda, Panchmahal district).

There is epigraphic reference to the popularity of Vaishṇavism during the rule of early Gurjaras and Chālukyas. The Kaira Plates of Dadda II (Praśāntarāga), Kalachuri year 380 (A.D. 629) alludes to Vishṇu's *Kaustubha* (dispelling darkness) with which the king's fame has been compared (Mirashi, *op. cit.*, part I, pp. 63ff).

Again, the Kavi plate of Jaybhaṭṭa IV, Kalachuri year 486 (A.D. 735) says that Jayabhaṭṭa defeated his enemies with his well-equipped army as Nārāyaṇa did with his discus (Mirashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 101 ff).

The Chālukyas of Gujarat were devoted to Vaishṇavism. The Navsāri Plates of Yuvarāja Śryāśraya-Śīlāditya, Kalachuri year 421 (A.D. 670) and of Pulakeśirāja, Kalachuri year 490 (A.D.739) begin with an invocation to the boar incarnation of Vishṇu They refer also to the boar emblem of the Chālukyas.

The popularity of the Krishṇa legend and of Vaishṇavism during the Maitraka-Gurjara period (5th-6th century to the 8th century) is borne out also by some interesting sculptures and architectural examples. The Vishṇu image from Bhinmal (M.R. Majmudar, *op. cit.*, 1960, pl. XLII) now preserved in the Baroda Museum and the headless image of Krishṇa killing Keśī (the identification is doubtful, it may represent Balarāma killing Dhenuka from Valabhi) are among the earliest sculptures on the theme of Vaishṇavism in the Rajputana-Gujarat region. These sculptures are stylistically ascribable to the 5th-6th century.

Vishṇu from Tenna (Surat district) discovered by Dr. R. N. Mehta and now preserved in the M. S. University, Baroda, resembles the Bhimmal Vishṇu in style and both these figures seem to belong to the same period, i.e. 5th-6th century (M. R. Majmudar, *op. cit.*, pl. XLIV B).

The Ananta-Vishṇu from Shamlaji may be ascribed on stylistic grounds to the end of the 6th century. It has eight hands and four faces. The drapery and the rope-like girdle with a loop, the excellent modelling of the torso with broad shoulders and expression of the face suggest Gupta influence. M. R. Majmudar suggests stylistic similarities between this image from Shamlaji and the Śiva image from Parel (Majmudar, *op. cit*, p. 209). The massive figure of Vishṇu Trimurti (with three faces) from Kaṭhlal, a few miles from Kapadvanj, is ascribable to the 7th-8th century. Among the other Vaishṇavite images of the Western Indian School datable to the 7th century, mention may be made of Śeshśāyi Vishṇu of the Jagannātha temple at Dilwara (Majmudar, *op. cit.*, pp. 209 and 210).

Kadvar contains the ruins of an old temple (c. 6th-7th century), which was dedicated to the boar incarnation of Vishṇu. Within and outside this building there are some fragments of the avatāras of Vishṇu, such as Vāmana and Paraśurāma, The image of Varāha is placed in the shrine (*Cousens, Somnatha and other medieval temples in Kathiawad*).

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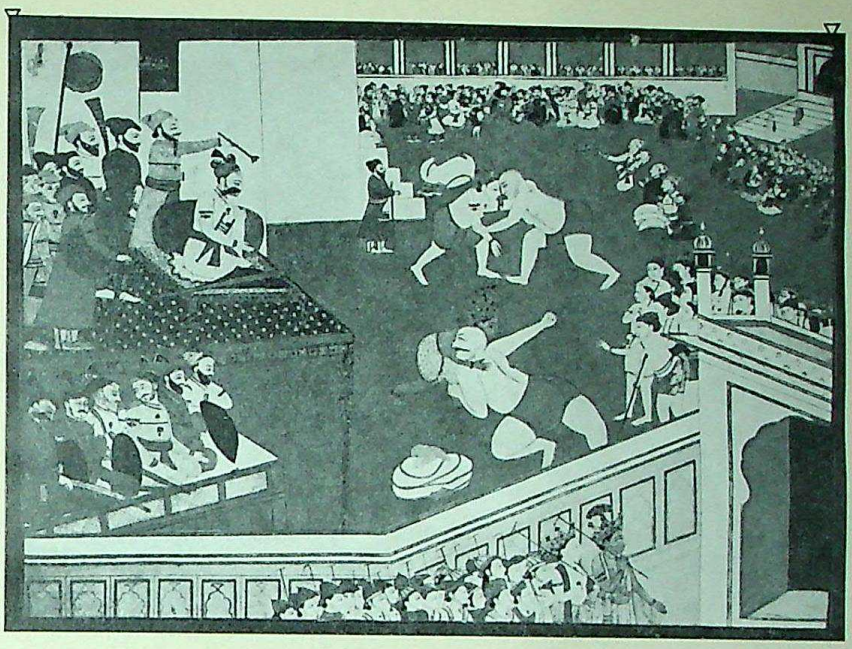

Illustration to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Krishṇa and Balarāma fighting Chāṇūra and Mushṭika, Kangra Style, c. 1800, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

The Gurjaras were followed by the Rāshṭrakūṭas who had a far-flung empire. The Cambay Plates of Govinda IV (A.D. 930) start with an invocation to Śiva, though followed by a praise in honour of Vishṇu. This is quite usual as the Rāshṭrakūtas paid in most of their inscriptions obeisance to both the gods. One of the epithets of Govinda is Vikrānta Nārāyaṇa which reminds us of the epithets of Vīra-Nārāyaṇa and Kīrtī-Nārāyaṇa borne by Amoghavarsha I and Indra III (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VII, pp. 26 ff).

Ascribable to this period or the pre-Solanki period are certain Krishṇa-līlā scenes carved on two panels, buried in the city wall of Wadhwan near Surendranagar at Saurāshṭra, to which our attention has been drawn by Prof. Michael W. Meister in an article published in the *Journal, Indian Society of Oriental Art*, New Series, Vol. V, p. 28. ff. The scenes represented in the Wadhwan panels include, among others, Krishṇa's birth; Krishṇa begging for butter; the killing of Pūtanā; the uprooting of the Yamalārjuna tree; the upturning of the cart; Yaśodā churning butter; the killing of Triṇāvarta, and Keśin; the uplifting of Govardhana; the subduing of Nāga Kāliya; the killing of Kuvalayāpīḍa; of the wrestlers, Chāṇūra and Mushṭika and the confrontation with Kamsa, leading to his death. They illustrate the popularity of the theme during this period. Garuḍa from Dohad, Panchmahal, is a beautiful sculpture of c.10th century A.D. The images of Dāśarathi Rāma from the Varāha temple, Kadvār, and Haladhara Balarāma from Kavi, Jambusar Taluk, Broach district may also be ascribed to this period (M. R. Majmudar, *op. cit.*, p. 277, pl. LXX, A and B).

The *Dvyāśraya Kāvya* (by Hemachandra) and the *Sarasvatīpurāṇa* mention that Siddharāja built the temple of Daśāvatāra or ten incarnations of Vishṇu. The *Sarasvatīpurāṇa* locates it on the south-west corner of the Sahasralinga lake. After Siddharāja, the cult seems to have received very little royal patronage until the time of Sāraṅgadeva. There is an inscription to show that Bhāva Brihaspati restored the worship of Vishṇu through the grants of subsistence, which apparently indicates the lack of royal patronage during the intermediate period between Siddharāja and Sāraṅgadeva (A. K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, 1956 p. 295). The Anavada inscription of Sāraṅgadeva, however, clearly shows that the Krishṇa worship received much fillip during the reign of this ruler. It is interesting to note that this inscription (dated Samvat 1348 or A. D. 1291) begins with a quotation from the *Gīta-Govinda*. It also records a list of gifts which were made by a number of persons including merchants and ship owners for the worship, offering and theatricals in honour of Krishṇa (*Indian Antiquary*, 1912, pp. 20 and 21; A. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-298).

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Śārgṅadeva's leaning towards Vaishṇavism is also indicated in an inscription of V.S. 1333 (= A.D. 1276) which describes him as a boar (incarnation) in upholding the country of Gujarat (A. K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p.181).

Some of the royal officers of the Chaulukyas were also patrons of Vaishṇavism. The Dohad inscription records the grant of land (three ploughs) by a Rāṇā towards the religious services of the God Goga-Nārāyaṇa installed six years previously by a Governor Resident at Dadhipadra (Dohad) for the well-being of his mother (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. X, 158 ff). "This Nārāyaṇa may be placed in the same category with Vallāla and Rūpa-Nārāyaṇa of Viśāladeva's inscription, No. 11 of Dr. Bühler's Chaulukya grants." (*op. cit.* p. 159).

In the name Goga-Nārāyaṇa, Goga seems to be the name of one of the ancestors of the Senāpati who established the temple. This was a common practice in India to name a temple after the name of its founder or its ancestor.

During the rule of the Chaulukyas, Krishṇa legends were fairly popular in different parts of their kingdom. It is well known that the Kāliyadamana and Giri-Govardhana scenes occur in the ceilings of Abu, Manod, Somnath and Mangrol. Hemachandra has referred to several incarnations of Vishṇu in his *Dvyāśraya Kāvya.* Abhayatilaka Gaṇi, who wrote a commentary on the *Dvyāśraya Kāvya*, has mentioned that Krishṇa had to live with Nanda out of fear of Kamsa. Further, he refers also to some of the childhood exploits of Krishṇa, such as the Keśivadha and Kamsavadha. "Commenting on a verse of the *Dvyāśraya* he explains *Chhanda* as *Jayadeva-Vedo vā.* There can hardly be any doubt that Abhayatilaka Gaṇi in mentioning Jayadeva in the context of metre was referring to the celebrated author of the *Gīta-Govinda*, which had been written half a century before the commentary of the *Dvyāśraya.* By comparing Jayadeva's work with the *Vedas* Abhayatilaka Gaṇi was following the practice of the orthodox Vaishṇavas who describe the *Gīta-Govinda* as the Vaishṇava *Veda...*" (A.K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 296).

The popularity of Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govinda* in Gujarat has also been clearly indicated in the Anavada inscription of the time of Sāraṅgadeva, as mentioned above.

Again, it may be mentioned here that the *Devapattana-praśasti* (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, pp. 439 ff) records the construction by Śrīdhara of two temples in Somanāthapattana, one sacred to Vishṇu in memory of his mother and the other, in honour of Śiva, called after his father Vallāla. Śrīdhara was an officer of Bhīma II and he constructed the temples in V.S. 1273 = A. D. 1216. Vastupāla, minister of the Vāghelā princes Lavaṇaprasāda and Vīradhavala, was a distinguished poet, who wrote the *Nara-Nārāyaṇānanda* dealing with the friendship of Krishṇa and Arjuna and abduction of Subhadrā by Arjuna (13th century) (S. N. Dasgupta and S. K. De, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1947, p. 678).

Now we may refer here to some important Vaishṇava shrines and varieties of Vishṇu images found in different parts of Gujarat during the Chaulukya period.

The principal shrine (10th century) at Vadnagar bears Mātrikā figures and is dedicated to the Devī. On the back of the main shrine there are 3 smaller ones of the same period. The northern shrine, however, was dedicated to Vishṇu, while the central one probably to the Sapta-Mātrikās and the southern one to Sūrya. Three niches on the walls of the Vishṇu shrine contain Nrisimha, Trimūrti and Varāha. Again, the jambs of the door-frame of the shrine show the figures of Daśāvatāras (Dhaky, *Journal of the Madhya Pradesh Itihas Parishad*, No. 3, p. 14).

The *Muni Bawa temple* near Than which is a Śaiva temple shows the figures of Brahmā and Vishṇu on *Uttraṅga* as turning to the central Śiva figure in supplication (10th century) (Dhaky, *op. cit.*, 20).

The Vishṇu temple at Khandosan (c. 11th century) has in the sanctum figures of Nrisimha, Vishṇu and Varāha as Pārśvadevatās (Dhaky, *op. cit.*, p. 24).

The Śrī Krishṇa temple at Valam (c. 12th century) is one of the earliest temples of the Siddharāja phase, with the image of Nrisimha, Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa and Varāha on the *bhadras* (Dhaky, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 and 45). The shrine at Mūla Mādhavapura (c. 11th century) in Saurāshṭra which is now in ruins seems to be contemporaneous with the Śiva temple at Sander. The brackets at the joinery of the lintels seem to show scenes depicting themes from Krishṇa's life (Dhaky, *op. cit.*, p. 34).

The only remaining part of the old temple of Mādhavarāj in Mādhavpura is a dome with a circular ceiling, showing an ornamental representation of Krishṇa slaying the serpent Kāliya (H. Cousens, *Somanath and other Medieval Temples in Kathiawad*, pl. XCII). A similar ceiling occurs in the temple of Nārāyaṇa, Manod, in North Gujarat, but in this case it is the four-armed Vishṇu, seated upon Śesha.

In front of the Modhera temple there is a spacious tank on the bank of which are several small shrines with various images including Jalaśāyī Vishṇu (Gadre, *Archaeology in Baroda*, 1947, p. 10).

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Dabhoi is an important site with the temple of Kālikādevī (c. 13th century). On the inside wall of this temple is depicted the legend of *Samudramanthana* (the churning of the ocean). On the outside surface are carved the figures of Pārvatī, Brahmā, Narasimha, Durgā fighting with Śumbha and Niśumbha, etc. The most interesting of all the sculptures is the panel depicting the killing of Parīkshit by Takshaka (Gadre, *op. cit.*, pl. XVIII). The carvings on the Baroda Gateway represent various deities including the incarnations of Vishṇu. Vishṇu with his *āyudhas* and Narasimha occur among other deities in reliefs on the northern or Mahudi Gate (c. 12th-13th century, Gadre, *op. cit.*, p. 13). Bardia near Dvārakā possesses two important Vaishṇavite shrines. One of them is the Rāma temple which is a fine specimen of Gujarat temple architecture (c. 12th century) (Gadre, *op. cit.*, p. 14).

Somnath Patan is one of the most famous pilgrimages of the Hindus. The pilgrimage to Dvārakā is not concluded till Patan is not completed. The Somnath temple which was raided by Mahmud of Gazhni in A. D. 1025 was a grand one, with sculptures which include, among other images, Vishṇu with Lakshmī and Sarasvatī. In one of the rock-cut stepwells here there is a panel representing Girigovardhana (H. Cousens, *op. cit.*, p. 32).

The Bhalkeśvara Talav or Bhalka Tīrth (the tank of the Arrow) is a small masonry pond at a short distance to the north-east of Veraval. It is said that Krishṇa met his death here.

Some reliefs of a Shamlaji temple of the late Solanki period portray Krishṇa and Rāma episodes (see pl. L, *Cultural History of Gujarat*, Bombay, 1965, by M. R. Majmudar). They include the Kāliyadamana and Pūtanāvadha as well as the kidnapping of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, the Mārīcha-vadha and the piercing of seven *Tāla* trees by Rāma. The reliefs are forceful and expressive.

H. Cousens has noted several old temples of different ages in the village of Visavada, 15 miles to the north west of Porbandar. Within a raised and paved courtyard are the twin temples of Śaṅkara and Ranchhoḍji, facing each other. "Within them, arranged around the courtyard, are smaller shrines in which are images of Vishṇu." These are structures of a late date (probably 13th-14th century) (*op. cit.*, p. 44).

Than is said to be one of the ancient places in India (*op. cit.*, p. 46). It is situated between Wadhwan and Rajkot. The shrine of the Than temple faces the east. According to a local tradition it was visited by Krishṇa. In a niche on the west or back wall of the shrine is the Varāha which would show that the temple was dedicated to Vishṇu (*op. cit.*, p. 41). Among the sculptures built into the courtyard of the main temple may be seen a Śeshaśāyī Vishṇu with Brahmā springing from his navel. The door way of the Ranik Devi temple in Wadhwan which is of (Siddharāja's time) contains among other gods also Vishṇu in a row above the temple (*op. cit.*, p. 53).

Madhav Vav is a stepwell in Wadhwan. In its walls 'upon either side, at intervals in the descend are sculptured niches, holding groups of images which are very much mutilated." These include among others representations of the Daśāvatāras or ten incarnations of Vishṇu, the triad of the Hindu gods Brahmā, Śiva and Vishṇu riding upon Śesha (*op. cit.*, p. 55).

In Sejakpur, six miles to the south-east of Dolia Railway station is an old temple of Navalakha, which contains on its wall Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa and Vishṇu, besides other figures, such as Brahmā, Śiva, Pārvatī, etc. (*op. cit.*, p. 58).

Around the main temple of Śiva, at Parbadi, two miles to the north-east of Anandapur there are a few small shrines of which one on the south-west appears to have been dedicated to the God Vishṇu (*op. cit.*, p. 61).

Kantela, some eight miles along the coast from Porbandar, has a few small shrines. Here there is a temple called Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa though it has now a Linga enshrined in it (*op. cit.*, p. 88).

Chaubari, about 4 miles to the north-east of Anandapur is a place of antiquarian interest. Here in the centre of a tank is a small shrine dedicated to Vishṇu (*op. cit.* p. 63). An image of Śeshaśāyī Vishṇu was found lying within it .

Mangrol in Kathiawad suffered much at the hand of the followers of Islam as Somnatha-patan did. The Jami Masjid at Mangrol is built mostly of the Hindu temple material. A ceiling panel from the Jami Masjid at Mangrol depicts the Kāliyamardana scene, i.e. the subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya (*op. cit.*, pl. LXXVIII).

The triple shrine at Kasara is an instance of a Tripurusha Prāsāda. The shrine has three sancta with a common Raṅgmaṇḍapa. It is dedicated to Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva. (Dhaky, *op. cit.*, p. 52). Most of the above temples and sculptured panels belong to the late Solanki period.

The Rukmiṇī temple at Dvārakā has been very badly renovated and as such, its historical importance cannot be discussed.

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Beautiful marble images have been found strewn over the ruins of the Koṭyarka shrine which was perhaps originally a Sun temple. One of them (c. 11th century) is an image of Hrishīkeśa, one of the 24 forms of Vishṇu (M.R. Majmudar, *Journal, Bombay University*, 1941, Part 2, p. 112 ff, fig. 1). Another is again an image of Vishṇu seated on his vehicle, Garuḍa. It is now preserved in a niche on the outer wall of a modern temple of Koṭyarka. The sculpture (c. 11th century) belongs to the Trailokyamohana or Viśvarūpa form of Vishṇu (*op. cit.*, fig. 6).

A sculpture at Modhera depicts Vishṇu as Trivikrama (Sankalia, *Archaeology of Gujarat*, Bombay, 1941, pp. 151-152). As Sankalia describes: "Its left leg is carried backwards, the right is stretched up to the chest, and seems to touch a solitary head." This head may be of Brahmā. Below is shown Vāmana accepting gift from Balī represented on the right (Sankalia, *op.cit.*, p. 152). The Nrityamaṇḍapa of the Sun Temple at Modhera (built in the 11th century) represents certain scenes from the *Mahābhārata* (Gadre, *Archaeology in Baroda*, 1947, p. 10).

The Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay has in its collection a panel from Taibur, Kaira district, depicting three Vishṇu figures. All of them stand in *samabhaṅga* pose and have identical head-dress and jewellery. They are distinguished, however, only by the position of the symbols in their hands. According to Sankalia, the first two correspond to the description of Vishṇu as Purushottama and Adhokshaja, mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa*, the *Rūpamaṇḍana*, and the *Agni Pūrāṇa*, and the third one may be identified with Janārdana as described in the *Rūpamaṇḍana* and the *Agni Pūrāṇa*. Stylistically, these figures belong to c. 13th century (Sankalia, *Bombay University Journal*, 1939, pt. 4, pp. 3 ff). The above said Museum preserves also two panels depicting the Trailokyamohana or Viśvarūpa form of Vishṇu (*op. cit.*, pp. 3 ff). Both of them are said to have come from Taibur, Kaira district and are ascribable to the 14th century. The first figure is seated on Garuḍa. It has ten hands. The proper two hands are in *Yogamudrā*. The other hands variously show *varadamudrā*, *khaḍga*, *chakra*, *abhayamudrā*, *kamaṇḍalu*, a citron-like object and *gadā*. According to Sankalia, it is a variety of Trailokyamohana or Viśvarūpa, and can be attributed to the 14th century. The other figure is in the same pose and has the same number of hands, though the attributes vary to some extent.

To Sandera, north Gujarat, are to be attributed two interesting images of the Ananta-Viśvarūpa class. One of them probably from Chandravati, near Palanpur is seated on Garuḍa in human form and is carved in white marble. It has twenty hands, showing various attributes, such as the rosary, *chakra*, citron fruit, *vajra*, *bāṇa*, *gadā*, *pāśa*, *khaḍga*, *kamaṇḍalu*, *śaṅkha*, *dhanuḥ*, *kheṭkaka*, etc. The proper two hands are in *Yogamudrā* while two other show *varada* and *abhayamudrā* (*Sankalia, op. cit.*).

The other figure of this variety from Sandera is also of white marble and is in the Rajkot Museum (Sankalia, *op. cit.*, p. 6). It has almost the same iconographical features and both of them can be assigned to the 12th or 13th century.

The above survey would show that the forms of Vishṇu that were popular here included Trailokyamohana or Viśva-rūpa Vishṇu, Varāha, Nrisimha, Trivikrama, Anantaśāyī and Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa. Among the scenes from Krishṇa's life, the Kāliya-mardana and Giri-Govardhana-dhāraṇa were the most popular themes. (Sankalia, *Archaeology of Gujarat*, Bombay, 1941, pp. 148-155).

There flourished in Gujarat many poets during the 15th-17th centuries, whose writings on the Krishṇa theme reflect the growing popularity of Vaishṇavism in the State. One of the earliest among them was Nayarshi or Natarshi (c. Samvat 1495=A. D. 1438-39). His well-known work is *Phāgu*, describing Krishṇa's *Rāsalīlā* with the Gopīs. Among the other poets, who can be attributed to the 15th century, are Mayaṇa, Bhālaṇa, and Bhīma. Mayaṇa's only book on the Krishṇa theme known is the '*Mayaṇa-chhanda* dealing with the *Syāmā-syāma Śriṅgāra* (Jagadish Gupta, *Gujarātī aur Brajabhāshā Krishṇa-Kāvya kā tulanātmaka adhyayana*,, Allahabad University, 1957, p. 3).

Bhālaṇa is an author of many works, such as the *Kādambarī*, *Nalākhyāna*, *Saptaśatī*, *Rāmabālacharitą*, *Daśamaskandha* and *Krishṇa-bishṭi*, etc. Bhālaṇa's language was simple and homely. As an example of this, may be quoted a passage describing Yaśodā's feelings:

"Come home, darling Māvajī I will give you milk and rice with a loving hand. You have grown rich since you went to Mathura; and powerful too. But, believe me, none loves you more than I do. Devakī herself will not hold you more fondly in her arms than I held you in mine when nursing you. Her body will never be as mine was then, all quivering in rapture.

Alas! I am your nurse, not your mother; you know it now. I know it. I know why you are wroth: I tied your hands, when you stole butter... None else can win love, forget it so lightly as you. Raghunāth! Lord of Bhālaṇ. Do remember your love for me, shortlived, though it was." (K. M. Munshi,

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Gujarat and its Literature, Bombay, 1954, pp. 171 and 172).

K. M. Munshi has cited the *Rukminī-haraṇa*, *Satyabhāmāvivāha* and *Krishṇabāla-charita* as Bhālaṇa's work. All these works, however, come under the *Daśamaskhandha*. Bhālaṇa's *Daśamaskhandha* is a beautiful composition even though it is a translation of the original *Bhāgavata*.

Bhīma wrote the *Harilīlāshoḍaśakalā* which seems to be based upon Vopadeva's *Harilīlā*. It is an abridged adaptation of the *Bhāgavata*.

The 16th century saw the advent of many great devotees and poets who popularised the Krishṇa theme through their compositions, songs and devotion. They include 1. Mīrā, 2. Narasimha Mehta, 3. Keśavadāsa, 4. Nākara, 5. Chaturbhuja, 6. Vaishṇavabhīma, 7. Kiku Vasāhī, 8. Vāsaṇadāsa, 9. Sedhaji, 10. Saṅta and 11. Phūḍa.

Mīrā and Narasimha Mehta were the greatest of them.

Narasimha Mehta was a prolific writer. His compositions include *Suratasaṁgrāma*, *Govindagamana*, *Chāturīchhatrisī*, *Chāturī-Shoḍaśī*, *Sudāmācharita*, *Rāsasahasrapadī*, *Śriṅgāramālā*, *Bālalīlā*, *Hiṇḍolānāṁpado*, *Krishṇajanamapado*, *Vasantanāṁpado* (Jagadish Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 13). Narasimha Mehta was a devout Vaishṇava. Though a Nāgara Brāhmaṇa, he freely mixed with the untouchables and sang bhajans with them. Krishṇa is very much fond of his devotees and accepts any gift readily that the devotee gives him, no matter whatever the caste and social status of the devotee may be. He said: "Where distinctions come in, God departs. To the eye of the dispassionate, all are equal." (Munshi, *op. cit.*, p. 196).

Narasimha's *Suratasaṁgrāma* depicts a battle of love between Rādhā with her friends and Krishṇa and his followers. It is an original composition with great literary value.

The poet lost his identity in Krishṇa consciousness and says that he took part in this incident. Rādhā sent a challenge to Krishṇa through the poet. He handed over the message of Rādhā to Krishṇa and advised the cowherds to surrender to the Gopīs. The cowherds refused and sent a message through Jayadeva asking the surrender of the Gopīs. But the Gopīs rejected the plea, so the battle ensued. And the missiles of love, such as "kisses, embraces, side-long glances shooting from winsome eye-brows", etc. were exchanged. Ultimately the cowherds were defeated. Rādhā occupied the territory of the vanquished. This story illustrates two things, firstly that the poet was so much elevated in his *sādhanā* that his mind merged into the realm of Krishṇa's exploits, and secondly that Jayadeva's influence on the poet was very high. Narasimha Mehta was a Śaivite in his early life. But later on, he became a follower of Vaishṇavism. It is said that Śiva himself initiated him into the mysteries of the Rāsalīlā. Narasimha Mehta's life was a complete surrender to Krishṇa. He was completely merged in Krishṇa consciousness. He speaks as if he was guided and inspired by Krishṇa. His *Bālacharita* vividly describes Krishṇa's joyous dance before Yaśodā. His obstinacy to his mother to bring down the moon to him, his mischiefs and the complaint of the Gopīs, all the incidents are narrated in beautiful and homely verses. All his works are the subtle interpretation of Krishṇa's divine play.

The name of Mīrā ranks very high among the devotees of the Bhakti Cult. Her grandfather, a devout Vaishṇava, exercised a great influence on her mind in her childhood days. Though she belonged to the royal house of Mewar, she mixed freely with the saints and bhaktas. This offended the aristocratic sentiments of the King of Mewar. Mīrā was persecuted in various ways for this but she remained unyielding. She left the palace, came to Mathura and prayed to Krishṇa with songs composed by her. She considered Krishṇa as her husband and she always longed to have his sight. Her whole mind and soul was merged in Krishṇa.

Mīrā is one of the greatest figures in the religious history of India in the 16th century. She had great literary gifts and her songs on Krishṇa move the human heart deeply.

The story of her life is not completely known to us. Mīrā was daughter of Ratan Singh, Ruler of Merta and married to Bhojraj, elder son of Rāṇā Sangha of Mewar. But he died in c. 1517.

Mīrā was presented an idol of Krishṇa 'Girdhariji' by the saint Raidas. This episode played an important role in her life. Raidas is mentioned by Mīrā as her Guru. He seems to have been the main inspiration of Mīrā's religious life. Among Raidas's other disciples, there was the Jhali queen who was also a great devotee of Krishṇa. In Rajasthan the cult of Krishṇa was very prominent in the 16th century and there arose temples and shrines in honour of Krishṇa during the period.

Mīrā lost her husband at an early age. After this happening, she came to Merta, but she found her stay there uncomfortable; consequently she left Merta and went on a series of pilgrimages about which we know very little except her clash with Jīva Gosvamī at Vrindavan. "When that famous divine,

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a follower of the great reformer Chaitanya, refused to accept her visit, she said: 'In the Braja Krishṇa Vāsudeva counted as only male and the rest of the world as females. There should be no objection for a pious devotee of Krishṇa to meet a woman at Vrindavan'. This event was a turning point in Mīrā's life and she completely gave up her worldly life and she began to live a life of simplicity.

Mīrā returned from North India pilgrimages to Chitorgarh and completely gave up her worldly life. But she did not stay there for a long time. As she freely mixed with the Sādhus and common men, the Rāṇā (Vikrama Singh) became displeased with her. But the Rāṇā's displeasure, almost verging on persecutions, could not dissuade her from her way of life. Some of her *bhajans* express her concern at the Rāṇā's attitudes. 'Govinda is my soul. The world repels me, I love only my Rāmajī. I know no other, saints devoted to Hari live in the palace of Hari, Hari lives away from the deceitful, but He lives beside my saints' (K. M. Munshi, *op. cit.*, p. 182).

> "Rāṇāji! What can I do! My love for Krishṇa is eternal. Rāṇā of Mewar what can I do? I am so tempted. My heart is at peace only when I worship my Rāma; otherwise, I cannot even sleep. The double rosary on my neck is to me a lonely ornament. How can I forget my Lord, my bridge-groom in all my past lives?" (K. M. Munshi, *op. cit.*, p. 180).

Mīrā came to Saurāshṭra and settled at Dvārakā about 1537 A.D. She found the Krishṇa temple there in ruins and got it repaired.

The popular religion in Saurāshṭra then was the Śakti cult and the people indulged in Garba dances connected with this cult of mother. Mīrā and Narasimha Mehta adopted the Garba dance to preach Krishṇa *bhakti*. The Krishṇa temple of Dvārkā was a very important centre of pilgrimage and Mīrā with the people here danced before an image of Śrī Krishṇa.

The Rāṇā of Mewar sent a deputation of some Brāhmaṇas to bring Mīrā back to Chitorgarh and they started a fast to that end.

In order to get divine guidance, Mīrā entered the temple of Ranchhoḍji and disappeared. To Mīrā, Krishṇa was the supreme God. The other Gods had no importance to her. She was submerged in thought of Krishṇa and she was united with Krishṇa in deep love. (On the life of Mīrā, see N. A. Thoothi, *Vaishṇavas of Gujarat*, London, 1935, pp. 227 ff; K. M. Munshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 183 ff).

Vallabhācharya (c. 1479-1531) visited Gujarat several times and converted many people to his faith. He was a householder and at the same time a great saint and philosopher. He was against all austerities and preached a normal life for the people. He laid down that Krishṇa should be clothed in rich garments and should be worshipped with all pomp and ceremony. One should love Krishṇa with the same feeling with which a wife loves her husband. The worship of Krishṇa should be in a true spirit of *sevā* (service). The devotee should dedicate his body, mind and his earthly belongings to the Lord (N. A. Thoothi, *op. cit.*, p. 94). It is the worship of Krishṇa as Bālagopāla that is most prevalent among the members of the community. The votaries of the Vallabha Community, while observing the night of the anniversary of the birth of Krishṇa are engaged to "greet the Divine Babe when He is born, to lull Him to sleep, to play with Him, to sing lullabies to Him, each vies with the other in serving Him through the night, and so naturally each has his or her share of pleasure and joy of serving the Lord." (N. A. Thoothi, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

The members belonging to the Vallabhite church perform eight daily services to Krishṇa, with songs describing the incidents of his life from the morning till He retires for rest at night.

Vallabhāchārya's doctrine is called Pushṭimārga. *Pushṭi* means the grace of God. One can attain His grace, if one has complete faith in Him. It was in the Grace of Lord that the Gopīs loved Him and became mad after Him. The Gopīs gave up everything and surrendered themselves completely to Him. Thus the origin and perfection of *Bhakti* depends upon God Himself. (For Vallabha's doctrines, see M. C. Parekh's *Shrī Vallabhāchārya, Life, Teachings and Movement*, Rajkot, 1969, pp. 112-295; B. M. Dhruva, *An Introduction of the Suddhādvaita School of Philosophy of Śrī Vallabhāchārya*, Baroda, 1960, pp. 100 ff).

Vallabhāchārya left an immense following in Gujarat. He was succeeded by his second son, Viṭṭhalanātha, a devotee, who visited Gujarat six times and made it an important centre of his activities. Viṭṭhala was a very good scholar and an able organiser. He introduced an important element, i.e, the performance of music before the deity in Vallabhite church. This music is related to natural phenomena in harmony with the changing reasons.

Both Vallabha and Viṭṭhala found in Gujarat a fertile soil for the spread of their faith: Among the important disciples of Viṭṭhala were Nagjī Bhaṭṭa of Godhra, Bhāila Koṭhārī of Ahmedabad, Jīva Parekh of Cambay and

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several others (M. R. Majmudar, *Cultural Histoy of Gujarat*, pp. 215 and 216).

Keśavadāsa was the author of the *Krishṇa-krīḍā-kāvya*. He flourished in the 16th century and was a contemporary of Śrī Viṭṭhalanātha, son of Vallabhāchārya. He composed his above *Kāvya* in Samvat 1592 (A.D. 1535) (Jagadish Gupta, *Gujarātī aur Brajabhāsha Krishṇa Kāvya Kā tulanātmaka adhyayana*, Allahabad 1957, pp. 20 ff), and it is based on the *Bhāgavata Daśamaskandha*. This work is held in high esteem in Gujarati literature. Keśavadāsa was a Kāyastha by caste and he hailed from Patan (K. M. Munshi, *op. cit.*, p. 172).

Nākara has many works to his credit. He was a Desaval Vaṇik of Baroda. Only one of his works, known so far, on the Krishṇa theme, is the *Bhramaragīta*, based on the *Bhāgavata Daśamaśkandha* (Jagadish Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 22).

The *Bhramaragīta* seems to have been a popular theme with several other poets of Gujarat, such as Chaturbhuja (c. 1519) and Brahmadeva (c. 1544). The *Rasikagītā* of Bhīma Vaishṇava (1515) relates also to the same episode as narrated in the *Bhramaragīta* of the *Bhāgavata*.

Vāsaṇadāsa, who flourished about 1543 wrote the *Krishṇa Vrindāvana Rādhārasa*, *Hari Chuāksharā*, Satyabhāmānī Kankotarī etc. While the first deals in general with the childhood exploits of Krishṇa with an emphasis on his *rāsa-līlā*, with Rādhā, the second is devoted mainly to the description of the beauty of Vrindavana and *holi*.

Kāsīsuta Sedhajī who flourished in Samvat 1647-1648 (1590-1591 A.D.) wrote the *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa*. His other works are based on the *Virāṭa-parva*, *Sabhā-parva*, *Hanumān-charita*, etc. Phūḍha composed the *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa* based on the *Bhāgavata*. His other composition is *Pāṇḍava-bishṭi*. His time has been fixed between (c. 1595-1626). Another important poet who dealt with the Krishṇaite theme during this period was Saṅta who translated the *Bhāgavata* into Gujarati (Jagadish Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 24 and 25).

The Vaishṇava theme continued to be predominant in the 17th century literature of Gujarat. Among the poets who dealt with the Krishṇa theme during the period, the important are: 1. Lakshmīdāsa, 2. Devīdāsa, 3. Śivadāsa, 4. Bhāū, 5. Vaikuṇṭhadāsa, 6. Paramānanda, 7. Krishṇadāsa, 8. Naraharidāsa, 9. Phāṅg, 10. Mādhavadāsa, 11. Premānanda, 12. Ratneśvara, 13. Vishṇudāsa, 14. Keśavadāsa Vaishṇava, etc.

The Vaishṇavite compositions of Lakshmīdāsa include the *Daśamaskandha*, *Gajendra Moksha*, etc. Devīdāsa wrote the *Rukmiṇi-haraṇa* and Śivadāsa's work is *Bālacharita* (early life of Krishṇa). Bhāū is known for his *Pāṇḍava-bishṭi*, describing Krishṇa's mediation for peace between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. Vaikuṇṭhadāsa wrote the *Rāsalīlā*

Krishṇadāsa's compositions include the *Sudāmācharita* and *Rukmiṇi-vivāha*. Naraharidāsa composed the *Ānandarasa and Gopī-Uddhava - samvāda*. Phāṅg wrote the *Kamsoddhāraṇa* and Mādhavadāsa, the *Daśamaskandha*.

Premānanda, as Saṭhodhra Brāhmaṇa, is the most well-known literary figure of the time. He was a prolific writer and his works, suffused with Pauranic spirit, were very popular among the people. Among his works pertaining mainly to the *Mahābhārata* and Krishṇa legends, the following may be mentioned: 1. *Draupadī-Svayaṁvara*, 2. *Bhagavadgītā*, 3. *Draupadī-haraṇa*, 4. *Subhadrā-haraṇa*, 5. *Lakshmaṇā-haraṇa*, 6. *Okhāharaṇa*, 7. *Sudāmā-charita*, 8. *Dāna-līlā*, 9. *Rukmiṇi-haraṇa*, 10. *Nalākhyāna*, 11. *Hariśchandrākhyāna*, 12. *Dhruvākhyāna*, 13. *Daśamaskandha*, etc.

Ratneśvar was a contemporary of Premānanda and a student of Sanskrit literature. He is known for his *Bhāgavata Daśamaskandha* and *Ekādaśaskandha* and *Bāramāsā*. Vishṇudāsa wrote the *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa*, and Keśavadāsa Vaishṇava, the *Mathurā-Mahimā* (K. M. Munshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-256).

Vaishṇavism received a new impetus in the activities of the Svāminārāyaṇa sect, founded by Sahajānanda, born about 1781. He was originally a disciple of Rāmānanda, so the doctrines of the sect owes a lot to Rāmānanda's teachings. The Svāminārāyaṇa sect opposed the 'gross epicurianism' of the Vallabha sect and laid great stress on virtuous conduct. It is why Sahajānanda naturally gathered a large following from all sects from the Brāhmaṇas down to the primitive tribes, like the Kathis and Kolis. But it is unfortunate that Sahajānanda also in the end gave way to pomp and ceremony and his followers worshipped Śrī Krishṇa in his person.

Some of the followers of this sect were good poets. Muktānanda and Premānanda Sakhī (1779-1845) composed poetry on Krishṇa's amorous *līlās*. Premānanda who considered himself as a Gopi of Krishṇa wrote with intensity of feelings.

The greatest poet of the time was Dayārāma whose compositions left an indelible mark on the Gujarati literature. "His *Rasika-Vallabha*, *Pushṭi-patha-Rahasya* and *Bhakti-Poshaṇa* are brilliant expositions of the philosophical basis of Vallabhism; in his *Guru-Śishya-Samvāda*, and *Praśnottarmālikā* he further unravels some of the biggest issues of metaphysics

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Illustration to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Western Indian Style, 16th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

and religion, of the higher and deeper problems of life; he praises and glorifies Hari in narratives (*ākhyānas*) from *Paurāṇika* lore, like Premānanda, in his poems like *Ajāmilākhyāna*, *Rukmiṇī-vivāha*, *Satyabhāmā-vivāha*; in his *Premarasa-līlā*, *Dāna-chāturī*, *Rāsapañchādhyāyī*, as also in his famous *Garbis*, he vividly portrays with great depth of feelings, rich pictures and idylls connected with the early life of Krishṇa as depicted in the *Bhāgavata* lore, and he wrote many *Kīrtanas* (hymns) of great lyrical value, rich in depth of thought and emotion, attuned to the self-surrender and the dedication of the devotee, which he used to sing before the holy shrine of Krishṇa in his home, and during his pilgrimage in the havelis of the Maharajas." (N. A. Thoothi, *op. cit.*, pp. 257 and 258).

The Bhakti movement started in all its fervour in Gujarat by Mīrābaī, Narasimha Mehta and several others was continued by later poets including Premānanda and Dayārama and by the followers of the Svāminārayaṇa sect. This religion is still a great force in the religious history of Gujarat. The long Vaishṇavite tradition in Gujarat found its highest expression in Mahatma Gandhi who was a great follower of Krishṇa and the *Gītā* which emphasises *Karma* without any desire for fruits.

Vaishṇavism had a great influence not only on the literature of Gujarat during the 15th to 18th centuries, but also on the pictorial art of the period. Some of the earliest Vaishṇava manuscripts with copious illustrations in Gujarati styles have come to light. They comprise the *Bhāgavata*, the *Gīta-Govinda*, the *Bālagopāla-stuti*, the *Bhakti-Ratnāvalī*, etc. Gujarat was the home of Krishṇa since he left Mathura and here arose many Vaishṇava religious centres. Dvāraka (where Krishṇa lived) and Prabhāsa-Pattana were and still are important Vaishṇava pilgrimages frequented by the Vaishṇava Bhaktas from different parts of India. It is well known that Śrī-Chaitanya also visited Dvārakā. It is quite natural that the religious texts of the Vaishṇavas were greatly popular in Gujarat and came to be illustrated by the Gujarat artists who had a long tradition of pictorial art, since about the 12th century A.D. Though the majority of the early illustrated manuscripts in Gujarati style are of Jaina affiliations, the Vaishṇavite subjects became popular from about the 15th century onward.

The earliest paper manuscript of the *Gīta-Govinda* with illustrations in Gujarati style, identical with that of the *Kalpasūtra*, *Vasanta-vilāsa* and the *Bālagopāla-stuti* has been ascribed to the middle of the 15th century.

Bhāgavata Daśamaskandha in the collection of His Holiness Sri Vrajabhushana-lalaji Maharaja of Kankroli, a descendant of Śrī Vallabhāchārya, near Nathadvara (Mewar) presents a miniature showing Krishṇa playing on flute in the centre and a pair of Gopīs on either side in characteristic Gujarati style adopted in the early *Kalpasūtra* manuscripts.

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The absence of the three-fourths eye projecting beyond the facial outline records the transition from the three-fourths eye to the strict profile, which continued in the early 16th century miniatures of the southern Rajasthani style. On this consideration, M.R. Majmudar dates the manuscript in question in the 15th century (*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. X, pp. 10 ff).

The Jodhpur illustrated manuscript of the *Bhāgavata* Daśamaskandha written in old Gujarati is dated Samvat 1667 (A.D. 1610). It was written at the request of Madhusūdana Vyāsa and illustrated by Govinda, the son of Nārada. It depicts various scenes including the *Rāsalīla* and the repentant Brahmā kneeling at the feet of Krishṇa (*Ibid.*).

A copy of the *Bhāgavata Daśamaskandha* of Bhālaṇa, illustrated with about fifty pictures, has come to light. The manuscript seems to have been painted in the 17th century when the pure Gujarati style was gradualy giving way to the Rajasthani style. It depicts various scenes of Krishṇa's childhood exploits, such as the mischief he played and the predicaments he caused to his mother Yaśodā. One day a Gopī came to Yaśodā to make a complaint against Krishṇa. Knowing this he made good his escape and Yaśodā ran after him with a stick to punish him, but in vain. Once Krishṇa wanted to suck his mother's milk, but Yaśodā was busy with the churning of curd, but Krishṇa prevented her from her work. The illustrations in Bhālaṇ's Daśamaskandha are rapid sketches following the rhythm of his poetry (*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. X, pp. 18 and 19).

Several illustrated series of the *Bālagopāla-stuti*, all painted in one style, have been discovered. According to some scholars this text should be attributed to Vilvamaṅgala or Līlāśuka, the author of the famous *Krishṇakarṇāmrita*. Some scholars think that he lived between A.D. 1250-1350. His poems depicting his passionate love of and self-surrender to Krishṇa attained a great popularity within a hundred years of composition, all over India as was the case also with Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govinda*.

Bālagopāla-stuti does not seem to be a close-knit work. It is an anthology of verses on Krishṇa from the pen of several poets. Some of its verses are not only to be found in the southern version of the *Krishṇakarṇāmrita*, but also in *Subhāshitas* describing the sports of child Krishṇa.

"The verse, for example, referring to the showing of the three worlds in the open mouth by Krishṇa to Yaśodā has been referred to by Kshemendra (c. 9th century A.D.) in his 'Aucitya Vichāra Charchā' (*Kavyamala*, Part I, p. 130), while illustrating 'adbhutarasa'.

"Another verse illustrating the *Rāsa-krīḍā* and forming one of the eight (ashṭaka) verses, describing the dance of Krishṇa with the Gopīs has been referred to in the commentary called *Subodhinī Bhāshya* on the *Bhāgavata* by Vallabhāchārya as (*kasyāpi*) somebody's. This fact suggests that the authorship of the verse was considered to be unknown by Vallabha in the 15th century." (*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. X, p. 20). O.C. Gangoly discovered the earliest of the series of the *Bālagopāla-stuti* in Gujarati and southern Rajaputana style. On a comparative study of the miniatures in the *Vasanta-vilāsa* and in this text he has come to the conclusion that the present miniatures should be ascribed to the middle of the 15th century (*Andhra Historical Research Society Journal*, IV, 1929, pp. 86-88). Dr. Norman Brown who also wrote on this manuscript (procured for the Boston Museum) has also ascribed the same date to these miniatures (Norman Borwn, *Eastern Art*, Vol. II, 1930, pp. 167-206).

The second illustrated series of the *Bālagopāla-stuti* were acquired by the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery. It consists of 65 folios (the folio No.8 is missing) containing verses over 315 in number. The miniatures in this series also show great technical skill and have many features common with the first series of *Bālagopāla-stuti* discussed above.

The other series of this text seems to be somewhat later in date as can be judged from the quality and characteristics of the paintings not so fine as compared to those in the first two series.

Recently the National Museum, New Delhi, acquired an illustrated copy of the *Gīta-Govinda* in old Rajasthani language. The manuscript belongs to the late 16th century and is important for stylistic consideration.

Several manuscript-copies of the *Bhakti-Ratnāvali* (the necklace of *Bhakti* gems) of Vishṇupurī, presenting the *Bhāgavata-bhakti* in popular form have come to light. One of these copies was done at Ahmedabad in Samvat 1806 = A.D. 1749. The miniatures contained in it reflect the characteristics of the 18th century Gujarati style.

The diffusion of the *Gīta-Govinda* and the *Bālagopāla-stuti* in Gujarat shortly after their composition indicates its popularity as a centre of Vaishṇavism.

Some of the temples in Gujarat as in many other states in India, contain mural paintings and wood-carvings with *Krishṇa-līlā* scenes. A small shrine at Padarsiṅgā near Damnagar in Kathiawad and the sanctuaries at Pudgaon and Tarabh in the Visnagar Taluk of Mehsana

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district are adorned with late medieval wall paintings of a high order, depicting scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Krishṇa-līlā*. In Baroda itself the spacious building (19th century), known as Tambekar's Wada, contain beautiful mural paintings, depicting among other themes, epic and *Krishṇa-līlā* scenes. Wood-carvings with *Krishṇa-līlā* scenes (c. 18th-19th century) are also to be found in various places in Gujarat.

The Gujarati artists have rendered a unique service to the popularisation of the Krishṇa-cult through the miniature and fresco-paintings.

RAJASTHAN

RAJASTHAN is one of the earliest centres of the Krishṇa-Vāsudeva cult. One of the oldest Bhāgavata records comes from Hāthibāḍā, half a mile east of the village Nagari in Udaipur state. The inscription in question, (a copy of which has been found also in Ghosuṇḍī, a nearby place) belongs to the second century B. C. and records the erection of an enclosing wall round the stone object of worship, called *Nārāyaṇa-vāṭikā* (*Pūjā-śīlā-prākāra-Nārāyaṇa-vāṭikā*) for the divinities Śaṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva (bhagavadbhyām Saṅkarshaṇa - Vāsudevābhyām) by one Sarvatāta, who was a devotee of Bhagavān (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXII, pp. 204 ff). According to certain scholars, the *pūjā-śilā* refers here to *Śālagrāma-śīlā*, a sacred stone typical of Vishṇu, as the Liṅga is of Mahādeva. Among the varieties of the Śālagrāma mentioned in the *Purāṇas*, one variety is called Saṅkarshaṇa, and another Vāsudeva (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. IX, p. 796). Thus it appears that the *Pūja-śīlās* here refer to *Sālagrāma-śīlā*, representing Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva. That Hāthibāḍa continued to be an important Vaishṇava site in subsequent times is evident also from another short inscription on a stone wall of the Hāthibāḍa enclosure. This inscription is in the script of the seventh century and reads as *Śrīvīshṇu-pādābhyām* (P. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 71).

The Hāthibāḍā inscription, which, as mentioned above, speaks of the erection of a stone enclosure for the worship of Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva within the Nārāyaṇa compound shows beyond doubt that the Bhāgavatas accepted the identification of their cult god, Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa by the second century B. C.

That Rajasthan was an early home of Bhāgavatism is evident also from a recently discovered inscription of c. second century B. C. from Amvalesvar, Chitor district, which mentions a Bhāgavata king Tapussa(?) who ruled over Apara and built a stone pillar. The inscription is awaiting a detailed study.

There is epigraphic as well as architectural and sculptural evidence to show that the Bhāgavata cult or Vaishṇavism in general was widely spread in different parts of Rajasthan during the early centuries of the Christian era. A *Yūpa* inscription from Barnalā (which is in Jaipur state) ends with the expression: 'May (god) Vishṇu be pleased; may *dharma* increase.' This inscription is dated the *Krita* year 335 (A. D. 279) (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 119 and 123). A stone inscription from Gangadhar (which is in Jhalwar district), Mālava Samvat 480 (A. D. 423), records the erection of a shrine for Vishṇu having *chakra* and *gadā* as his attributes by one illustrious Mayūrāksha (*Vishṇoḥ sthānamakārayat*) (D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 400 ff). A Nagarī (Mewar) inscription of Vikrama Samvat 481 (A. D. 424) also refers to the construction of a Vishṇu temple (V.S. Srivastava, *Rājasthān Bhāratī*, Vol. VIII, Pts. 3-4, pp. 77-82).

In Rangmahal in Bikaner, were found two terracottas, one representing the Govardhana-līlā (Krishṇa raising the Mount Govardhana) and the other, the dānā-līlā (Krishṇa taking toll-tax). These terracottas, stylistically ascribable to the Gupta period, are now in the Bikaner Museum (*Lalitkala*, Vol. VIII, pl. XXI, figs 1-2). The pillars from Mandor near Jodhpur (now housed in the Jodhpur Museum) depict various scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as the Śakaṭa-bhaṅga (the upturning of the cart), dadhi-manthana (churning of curd), Keśi-vadha (killing of Keśi), Govardhana-līlā, Dhenuka-vadha (the killing of Dhenuka), Arishṭa-vadha (killing of Arishṭa) and Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya) (*Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1905-06, pp. 135 ff).

As to the evidence of the worship of Vishṇu during the Gupta period, mention may be made of two Vishṇu images, found in Pisangan, District Ajmer and Katara, District Bharatpur. The huge statues of Balarāma and his consort Revatī from Rupbasa (Bharatpur State) are also ascribable to the Gupta period (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, p. 341).

The popularity of Krishṇa and Vishṇu worship increased in Rajasthan with the

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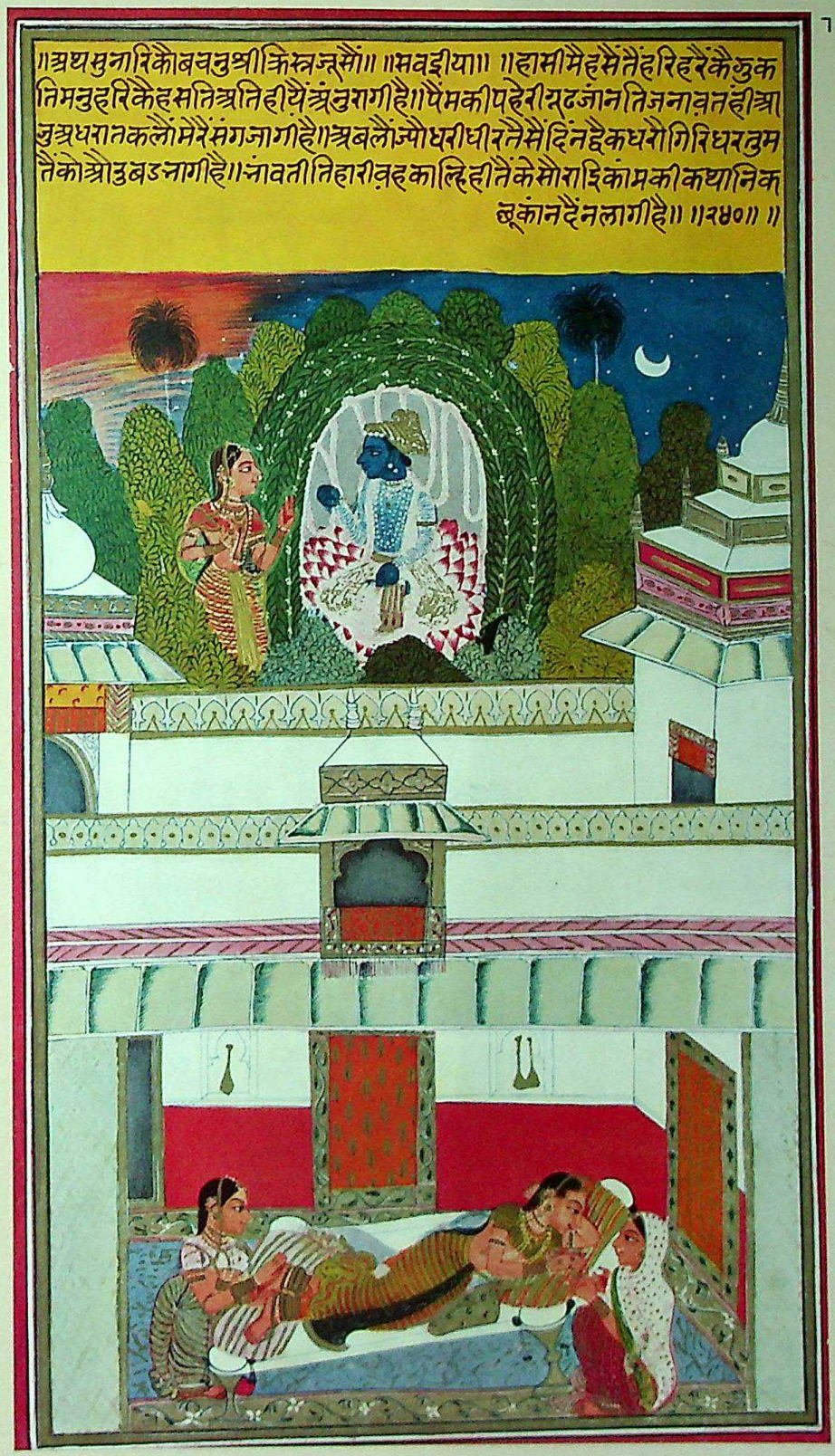
॥अथ सुनारिकौ बचनु श्रीकिस्न जूसौं॥ ॥सवइीया॥ ॥हासी मैहसैं तैं हरि हरैं कै झुक
ति मनु हरि कै हसति अति हीयैं अंनुरागी है॥ पैंमकी पहेरी गूढ जांन तिजनावत हीं आ
नु अधरात कलौं मेरैं संग जागी है॥ अबलौं ज्यौ धरी धीर तैसैं दिंन द्वैक धरौ गिरिधर तुम
तैं कौ औ तुबड भागी है॥ भांवती तिहारी वह काल्हि ही तैं के सौ राइ कांम की कथा निक
छूकांन दैं न लागी है॥ ॥२४०॥ ॥

Rādhā's confidante (the wife of a goldsmith) giving her message to Krishṇa, illustration to the Rasikapriyā, Bundi, c. 1700, National Museum, New Delhi.

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passage of time as is evident from epigraphical, literary and other sources.

The Udaipur inscription of Aparājita, V.S. 718 (A.D. 661) records the construction of a temple of Vishṇu by Aparājita's wife, Yaśomatī to enable her to cross the troubled waters of worldly existence (G.N. Sharma, *Rajasthan Studies*, pp. 115 and 116; *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, pp. 29-33). Vishṇu images of various types and Krishṇa panels representing the early life of Krishṇa were carved in plenty in Rajasthan during the medieval period as is the case with many other parts of India. Epigraphical evidence would show that in Alwar existed Vishṇu shrines during the 7th-8th century. About this time Murāri temples were also built in Kama in Bharatpur and several other places (V.S. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-84). The Kāmavan inscription of the 8th century mentions Vishṇu's attributes: *saṅkha*, *chakra*, *gadā*, his consort, Lakshmī, and his epithets Śauri, Madhusūdana and Ghanaśyāma (the last three are also very popular appellations of Krishṇa). Similarly, a fragment of stone inscription of the eight-ninth century from Mandor (now preserved in the Jodhpur Museum) mentions Nāga Śesha, Vishṇu's bow called *śārṅga*, his epithets, Keśava, Hari, Vāsudeva, Śauri and his incarnations, Vāmana and Nrisimha. It also refers to Krishṇa's sports with Rādhā and other Gopīs. Gopī-girau Gokule śrutvā(?) Rādhikāyāḥ svabhūshaṇa-vidhiḥ Śaureḥ kritaḥ...rūpam Hareḥ pātu vaḥ. A fragment of basrelief in the Kotishwar temple of Kāmā shows the *Goshṭha-līlā* of Krishṇa (G. N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 116).

The Mandor Bāorī inscription, Vikrama Samvat 742 (found near Mandor Rly. Station) and the Jodhpur inscription of Pratihāra Bauka pay homage to Vāmana and Hrishīkeśa respectively: Om namaḥ Vishṇave sa vaḥ pāyād-dhrishīkeśo nirguṇassaguṇaścha yaḥ (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVIII, Inscription, No. 12).

The early medieval temples at Osian contain many *Krishṇa-līlā* scenes, including the *Kāliya-mardana*, *Dhenuka-vadha*, *Govardhanadhāraṇa*, *Keśī-vadha*, *Śakaṭa-bhaṅga*, *Pūtanā-vadha*. Vasudeva carrying Krishṇa on his head, Krishṇa and Yasodā, etc. (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, p. 346).

Balarāma is depicted in one of the subsidiary shrines of a Pañchāyatana Harihara temple outside the village at Osian. Attention may be drawn to Rādhā and Krishṇa (with his flute), depicted on the ceiling of a shrine of a small chapel to the right of the Sachyamāta temple at Osian (*Annuat Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1908-09, p. 110). The main shrine shows Saṅkarshaṇa, Vāsudeva and the *Govardhana-līlā* scene. The Sun temple inside the village at Osian contains representation of Balarāma and Krishṇa. Both of them are four-armed and seated on Garuḍa. It is interesting to note that Balarāma has the club and ploughshare in two of his rear hands and his two front hands show the *jñānamudrā* and a conch. J.N. Banerjea holds that "Balarāma on Garuḍa and with a conch in his hand is a mode of showing *Vyūha* Saṅkarshaṇa, the other being that where he is depicted like Vāsudeva in all respects, but holding the *gadā*, *saṅkha*, *padma*, and *chakra*," (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, p. 348).

Krishṇa story became so popular during the medieval period that scenes from his life find depiction in many Śaiva temples, such as those at Kiradu, Kekinda, Bhandadevra, Sikar, Harshanath, Arthuna, Jagesvara and several other places.

The Someśvara temple at Kiradu also depicts *Śakaṭa-bhaṅga*, *Keśī-vadha*, *Arishṭa-vadha*, *Girigovardhna*, a gopī with a vessel on her head, Yaśodā with Krishṇa, Krishṇa eating sweets and meals, and Krishṇa fighting with Kamsa or a Malla (wrestler) (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, p. 350—351).

At Kekinda, the domical ceiling of the Nīlakaṇṭha Mahādeva temple (10th-11th century) contain many scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as the *Keśī-vadha*, *Arishṭa-vadha*, *Pūtanā-vadha*, the stealing of butter, Nanda and Yaśodā, etc. Inside the Sabhāmaṇḍapa of the same temple is a sculpture showing a lady with a child on her lap, identified by Bhandarkar with Yaśodā and Krishṇa (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, p. 349).

The ceiling of the early medieval Jagesvara temple (Sāḍāḍī) shows Vishṇu and his avatāras and several scenes from Krishṇa's life, such as the churning of curd, Krishṇa and Yaśodā, Krishṇa killing Kuvalayāpīḍa, fighting a Malla, etc. (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXX, p. 351).

The inscription of Bāllāditya from Chatsu (twenty-six miles south of Jaipur city) states that he (Bāllāditya) erected a temple of Murari. The inscription is ascribable to c. 10th century (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XII, pp. 10 ff). Again, the Pushkar inscription of early 10th century (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 241 ff) begins with an adoration to God Vishṇu, who granted his disciples the privilege of living in Śvetadvīpa.

The Chāhamāna rulers were devoted to Śaivism; but it is interesting to note that Lakshmīrāja showed religious eclecticism by having built a temple in honour of Vishṇu in Nadol (V.S. Srivastav, "Rājasthān Ke Prāchīna Vaishṇava Mandir evam Pratimāyen", *Rājasthān Bhāratī*, Vol. VIII, pp.

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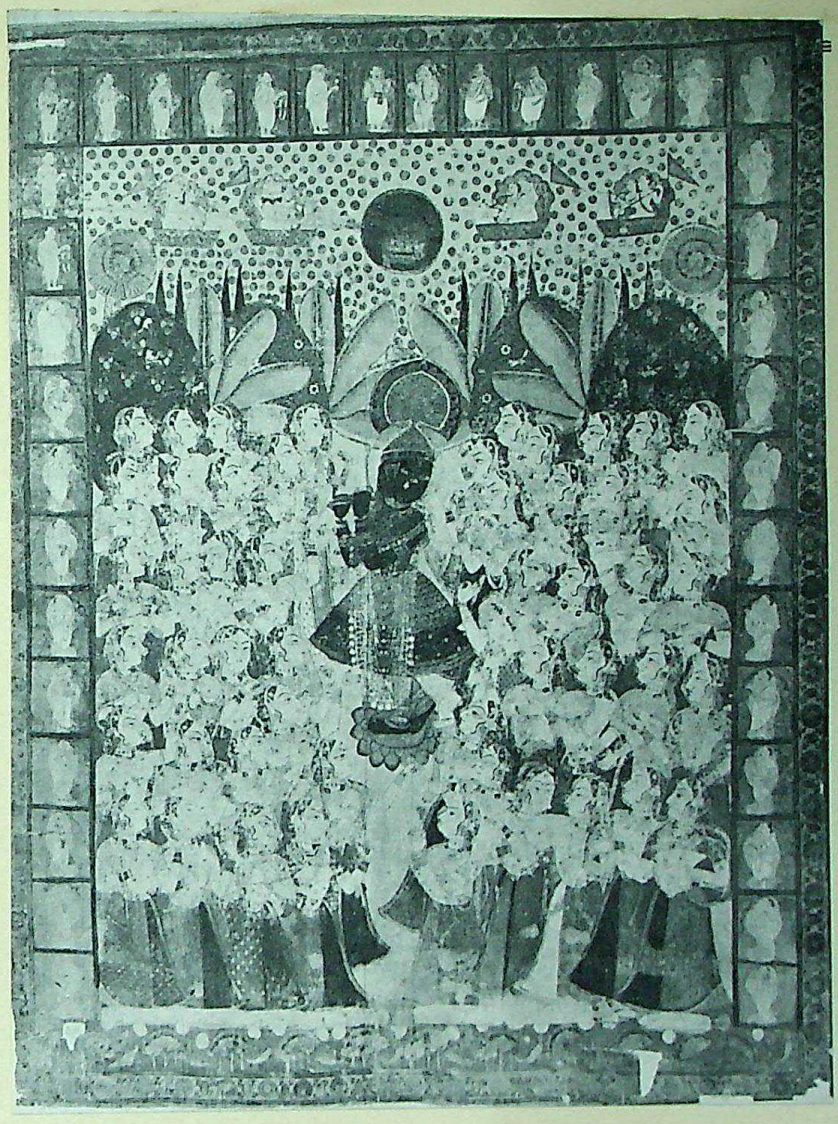

Krishṇa playing on flute, painting on cloth, Nathadvara, 19th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

77-82). The copper-plate of Chāhamāna King, Ratnapāla contains a reference to the worship of Vishṇu: Jagat-mahīyasām pāpa-pāṭana ...janma-jarā maraṇa rakshā-prabha-Vishṇum pūjayitvā.

The Ajmer inscription of Ajayarāja (12th century) (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIX, pp. 178 ff) contains thirty-two verses, devoted to the praise of Vishṇu and mentions his ten incarnations including Krishṇa as the eighth one. Because of vandalism and other causes of destruction, very few medieval Vishṇu temples exist now in Rajasthan. Of them, the Harihara temples in Osian, Vishṇu temple in Buchkala, the Abaneri temple, the Chakresvari temple of Nānā, the Ranchoḍ Rāya temple at Khed, the Mira Mandir at Ahar, the Maduaji temple (V.S. 1242) at Mungthala, in Sirohi are noteworthy.

The Jodhpur inscription of Vikrama Samvat 1340 (A.D. 1283) gives a very beautiful description of Krishṇa's Govardhana-līlā (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV. p. 313): Prārambhe hasitam bhuja-bhrama-kritair-āmdolanair vishmitam mlānam bāhu-latopapīḍan-bhiyā prollāsane bhū-bhritaḥ dattāḥ Krishṇa-Karābjaśāyinage śreyāmsi puhsṇamtu vo Gopibhir bhuja-valli-kankaṇa-kaṇatkārottarāstālikāḥ (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, p, 313). Of particular interest with reference to Krishṇa worship, is the Ekaliṅga (near Udaipur) inscription, V.S. 1485, mentioning the construction of a temple in

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honour of Dvārakādhiśa-Krishṇa by Mokala. The Shringi Rishi inscription, V.S. 1485 tells that he (who was a great devotee of Nārāyaṇa) adorned Nārāyaṇa in the form of Varāha of Pushkar (G.N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 117). A big stone inscription of V. S. 1500 (=A. D. 1444) fixed on a wall in a temple of Krishṇa on a hill near the village of Kadiyan, 16 miles of Udaipur records that a Brahmin called Tila Bhaṭ built this temple during the reign of Rāṇā Kumbha (G. N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 117; "Maharana Kumbha" *Sarada*, pp. 175 ff).

Rāṇā Kumbha was a devout Vaishṇava. He was also a great builder. The palaces, temples and towns built by him display superb Rajput architecture. As a mark of his devotion to Krishṇa, he built the Kumbha-śyāma temple in V.S. 1505 (A.D. 1448). This temple is erroneously called by some Mīrā Bāī temple. The Kīrtistambha of Chitorgarh, also built by Rāṇā Kumbha, in V.S. 1505 (A.D. 1448) contains scenes from Krishṇa's life, especially the Govardhana-līlā. There are inscriptions recording the erection of images of Śrīdhara, Krishṇa, Rukmiṇī, Rāma-Lakshmaṇa and Mādhava Tulsi by Rāṇā Kumbha at Chitor. Again, there are two inscriptions preserved in the Victoria Hall Museum at Udaipur, recording the installation of the images of Vāsudeva and Dāmodara in V.S. 1576 (A. D. 1519). The Kumbhalgarh inscription mentions Gadādhara whose temple is situated near the Mahālakshmī Temple at Chitor (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 314-28).

A great wave of Krishṇa worship seems to have swept all over Rajasthan during this period, as is well illustrated by the life and teachings of Mīrā Bāi, a great devotee of Krishṇa. She was immersed in thoughts of Krishṇa and her songs on the Lord deeply move human heart. She was a princess of Rajasthan, but Dvārakā was the main centre of her activities as we know. The story of her life has been given in the section on Vaishṇavism in Gujarat.

To Mīrā, Krishṇa was the supreme God by the side of whom the other gods were of no importance. Her devotion to Krishṇa was so great that she considered herself always in union with the Lord.

One of the beautiful Sanskrit compositions on the Krishṇa theme from Rajasthan is the *Krishṇa-gīti* by Somanātha (c. 15th-16th century), published by the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jaipur. The *Krishṇa-gīti* is in imitation of the style of the *Gīta-Govinda* of Jayadeva. It shows a free play of both *Śriṅgāra* and *Bhakti*. The poet was inspired to compose the treatise out of his intense *bhakti* to Krishṇa and not with any intention to rival Jayadeva's work. The subject matter of Somanātha's composition is the love of Rādhā and Krishṇa, depicting the aspects of Śriṅgāra, Vipralambha and Sambhoga. Like the *Gīta-Govinda*, the *Krishṇa-gīti* gives the scope of recitation (*Pāṭha*), vocal music (*gīta*), dance and drama (*nāṭya*).

There is ample evidence to show that Vaishṇavism acquired great popularity throughout Rajasthan during the sixteenth century onward, and many temples for Vishṇu and Krishṇa were erected during this period. The people of Barvasa (Dungarpur) built a Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa temple in V.S. 1589. Mahārānā Jagat Singh built the Jagannātha Rai temple in Udaipur in 1651 A.D. With the help of Mahārāṇā Raj Singh the image of Śrī Nāthji was brought from Mathura in order to save it from the destructive activities of Aurangzeb, and it was installed in Nathadvara, 25 miles north-east of Udaipur. There are two inscriptions of V.S. 1732 (1675 A.D.) showing Raj Singh's devotion to Krishṇa (R.C. Agrawal, "Rajasthan men Vishṇupūjā", *Rājasthān Bhāratī*, Vol. 8, Aṅka 4, p. 9).

Similarly, the image of Dvārakādhiśa was set up in Kankroli (G.N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 117 and 118). The kings of Jaipur also showed allegiance to Vaishṇavism. The famous idol of Govindadeva (worshipped by Rūpa Gosvāmī in Mathura) was brought to Amber. Later on it was taken to Jaipur and installed in Chandra Mahal (Jaipur Palace). Bāī Chandrāvatī built the Vishṇu temple in Galta in memory of Madho Singhji of Jaipur in V.S. 1831 (A.D. 1774).

The later princes of Rajasthan continued their support to Vaishṇavism. Archival records refer to many donations of land and money for the maintenance of Vaishṇava temples of which those of Kalyāṇji and Jagat Śiromaṇiji are prominent.

The paintings of Rajasthan throw considerable light on the popularity of Krishṇa worship in Rajasthan. The schools of Jaipur, Mewar, Bundi, and Kishangarh, etc. were largely inspired by the Krishṇa theme. The Pichwais of Nathadvara, which was an important centre of *Pushṭimārga* advocated by Vallabhāchārya, illustrates some popular themes associated with Krishṇa's life, namely the Dānalīlā, Rāsalīlā, the Śarat Pūrṇimā and Gopāshṭamī festivals, etc. (Robert Skelton, *Rajasthani Temple Hangings of the Krisṇa Cult*, New York, 1973, pp. 25 ff).

The followers of *Pushṭimārga* worship Krishṇa as a child. As a mother takes care of her child, the devotees similarly care for Krishṇa. They look upon him not only as an Avatāra, but also as an Avatārī, i.e. God himself (Krishṇastu Bhagavān svayam) and Rādhā as his eternal spouse. One can attain *moksha* only through the grace of Krishṇa.

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There are many important centres of the *Pushṭimārga* in Rajasthan, namely, Udaipur (Nathadvara, Śrī Nāthji), Kankroli (Dvārakādhīśa), Kota (Mathureśajī), Jodhpur (Bāla-Krishṇajī), Kishangarh (Madanamohanajī), Bundi (Śri Krishṇa Gopālajī), Bharatpur (Madanamohanajī), etc.

For a comprehensive study of the history of Vaishṇavism in Rajasthan, one should take into account also the wall painting (depicting Krishṇa themes) in various Rajasthan palaces such as those at Udaipur, Kotah, Bundi, Jaipur, Tonk and several other places.

Illustration to the Gīta-Govinda, Western India Style, 16th century, N. C. Mehta Collection, Gujarat Museum Society, Ahmedabad.

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NORTHERN INDIA

DELHI

DELHI (especially Indraprastha) was closely associated with the political career of Śrī Krishṇa. As the *Mahābhārata* clearly shows, Krishṇa as a friend and adviser of the Pāṇḍavas, spent a considerable time in Indraprastha.

Indraprastha, said to represent the site of thePurana Qila, is one of the five villages which Yudhishṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, demanded from Dhritarāshṭra and Duryodhana (the latter deprived the Pāṇḍavas of their own territory). It is said that Dhritarāshṭra asked the Pāṇḍavas (after their marriage with Draupadī) to live in Indraprastha. In obedience to Dhritarāshṭra's wishes the Pāṇḍavas came to Indraprastha (situated on the bank of the Yamunā, between the Kotla Ferozshah and Humayun's Tomb). The story is that around Indraprastha there was a huge forest known as Khāṇḍava-vana which was inhabited by the nāgas, and other animals. The demon architect, Maya, also lived in this forest. Arjuna aided by Krishṇa burnt down the Khāṇḍava forest, and this forced the Nāgas including Takshaka and his son Aśvasena to leave the Khāṇḍava-vana. This event led to a hostility between the Nāgas and Pāṇḍavas. To take revenge upon Arjuna, Aśvasena magically entered the quiver of Karṇa in the shape of an arrow and intended to kill Arjuna. This also explains why Takshaka, of all the nāgas, offered to bite Parīkshit to death to fulfil the curse of the Brāhmaṇa Śrīṅgī (P. Banerjee, *Early Indian Religions*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1973, p. 99).

It is interesting to note that Krishṇa and Arjuna spared the life of Maya, the architect. And the latter, out of gratitude, constructed a wonderful assembly hall for Yudhishṭhira at Indraprastha. This hall was so splendid that Duryodhana after visiting it became filled with jealousy against the Pāṇḍavas, leading ultimately to the Kurukshetra war. "The name of Indraprastha is preserved in that of Indrapat, one of the popular names of the fort Purana Qila, which is still pointed out as the fort of Yudhishṭhira. The fort was repaired or built on the original Hindu foundations by Humayun and was called Dinpana. It now contains the Qila Kohna Mosque the building of which was commenced by Humayun and completed by Sher Shah and also Sher Manjil (or the palace of Sher Shah, which was used as a library by Humayun on his reaccession to the throne and in which he met with his death by an accidental fall." (Nundo Lal Dey, *The Geographical Dictionary of India*, London, 1927, pp. 77 and 78). It was in Indraprastha that Yudhishṭhira performed his Rājasūya sacrifice, on which occasion Krishṇa killed Śiśupāla with his *chakra*, for his misconduct.

It is, however, not well known how long Indraprastha retained its glory. After the Kurukshetra war, the Pāṇḍavas transferred their court to Hastināpura and Indraprastha lost its previous glory. It is, however, stated in the *Mahābhārata* that after Krishṇa went to his heavenly abode, Dvārakā was submerged in water and Arjuna came to take the old men, ladies and children out of Dvārakā to Hastināpura. The Ābhīra robbers attacked them on the way and took away most of the women. Arjuna, however, was successful in bringing Krishṇa's chief queens and his grandson Vajra (son of Aniruddha) and Vajra was placed on the throne of Indraprastha. The later history of Indra-prastha is full of many uncertainties.

The above account would, however, lead us to believe that the Krishṇa cult was well known in the Delhi region quite early. It is, however, regrettable that most of the Vaishṇava remains in Delhi (this is also applicable in the case of other Śaiva and Jaina relics) are not now extant.

That Vaishṇavism was, however, widely known in the Delhi region and its neighbour-hood during the Gupta times is evident from certain interesting relics. Recently, a clay seal-die was found at Indraprastha (Purana Quila), which bears the device of *Śaṅkha* and the legend 'Gopasya' in the early Gupta characters of the 4th century (K.K. Thaplyal, *Studies in Ancient Indian Seals*, Lucknow, 1972, p. 158).

Again, one of the significant Vaishṇava relics of the Delhi region is the Iron Pillar with an inscription of Chandra, now at the

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Qutb. The inscription records the wide conquests of the king Chandra, identified by most of the scholars with Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty (c. 380-413) and also refers to the erection of the pillar in question which is called a *dhvaja* or standard of the god Vishṇu on the hill called Vishṇupada (ten-ā yaṃ praṇidhāya bhūmipatinā bhāvena Vishṇoḥ matim prāṅśur-vishṇupade girau bhagavato Vishṇor dhvaja sthāpitaḥ) (D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, University of Calcutta, 1965, p. 285; Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, p. 141).

Some scholars are of the opinion that the pillar was not originally in Mehrauli and it was brought here from some other place as is the case with the Aśoka columns in Delhi and possibly the Aśoka (and Gupta) column at Allahabad. But according to Fleet, "the fact that the underground supports of the column include several small pieces of "metal-like bits of bar-iron" is in favour of its being now in its original position as they would probably have been overlooked, and left behind in the process of a transfer." (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 141). If Fleet's observations are correct, then the Delhi region was surely a very important centre of Vaishṇavism and Chandra, the author of the pillar, who was himself a great devotee of Vishṇu, for this reason chose to erect it here. D. C. Sircar, however, thinks that the Vishṇupada hill where the Iron Pillar was erected was not far from Kurukshetra and the Beas. In support of his view he quotes the following verses from the *Mahābhārata*, III, 78, 8 ff and also 103ff and III. 138, 8: gatvā hi śraddhayā yuktaḥ Kurukshetram Kurūdvahaḥ / tato gachchet dharmajño Vishṇoḥ sthānamuttamam / Etadvishṇupadam nāma drishyate tīrthamuttamam / eshā nadī Vipāśā cha nadī paramapāvanī (D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 185). D. R. Bhandarkar, however, relying on some verses of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* thinks that the Vipāśā and the Śālmalī were all in the Vāhlīka country and Vishṇupada was on a hill near the Vipāśā from where Kashmir was not far distant (*Journal, Andhra Historical Research Society*, Vol. X, p. 87).

Again, it may be mentioned here that a huge slab has been found on the outskirts of Haidarpur, 10 km north of Delhi containing scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This slab, which can be attributed to the medieval period, is now in the possession of the Archaeological Survey of India and preserved inside the premises of the Safdarjang Tomb, New Delhi.

The Quwat-ul-Islam mosque at Qutb was built, as it is well known, out of the ruins of many Hindu and Jaina temples which existed in the neighbourhood and as such this mosque contains several panels showing Hindu and Jaina themes. For our present purpose, we may refer to the Vishṇu sculptures and the representations of ten incarnations fixed in the wall of the mosque on the south on the outside, and the one very interesting panel depicting the birth of Lord Krishṇa fixed in the wall on the north side above a window panel. This panel must have been taken from a Vaishṇavite temple which can be presumed to have existed somewhere near Mehrauli. In style of execution, it is somewhat similar to the figure of the mother and the divine child found at Pathari in Madhya Pradesh and ascribable to the 9th-10th century. The panel is 4′9″×7½″, and the height of the carved panel is 5¾″.

The extreme left of the relief shows a watch man with a staff held erect in his hand. He is apparently a guard appointed by Kamsa to keep a watch over the prison cell where Vasudeva and Devakī were kept by Kamsa. Next, is shown Devakī lying on a couch. She rests her head on the right hand and with her left hand, holds her breast to Krishṇa to suckle. A female attendant is shampooing the left leg of Devakī, while an attendant, standing nearby, holds a fly-whisk. To the right is shown a cylindrical wicker work stool with a cushion on it.

The next part shows a female figure handing over the newly born child Krishṇa to a male figure, presumably Vasudeva. "Vasudeva is next shown as standing to the door where miraculously the door is half opened, one of the door leaves being closed and the other ajar. We next see Vasudeva and the child adjoining the river Yamunā which is symbolically indicated by a large lotus ..." and a crocodile and a tortoise. Next Vasudeva is shown having reached Gokula (which was a settlement of the cowherds) symbolised by two jars, one placed on the other. The next scene shows the divine child Krishṇa being received by a female figure. Next, mother Yaśodā is shown lying on the couch with the child by her side. A male figure holding a staff shampoos the left foot of Yaśodā (K. N. Dikshit, *Journal, U. P. Historical Society*, Vol. XVII, part I, pp. 84-86).

That Vaishṇavism continued in popularity in the Delhi region during the Gahadaval times (11th-12th century) is evident from the discovery of a Vishṇu image found in Meharauli and now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi. It is a standing image of black stone, with four arms, holding *śaṅkha*, lotus, *gadā* and *chakra* as attributes. Miniature Vishṇu images and the incarnations are arranged as decorative details on the background of the nimbus (C. Sivaramamurti, *5000 Years of the Art of India*, fig. 256).

There is an inscription on the pedestal of the image dated Samvat 1204 (A.D. 1147). The inscription records the dedication of the

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image by an affluent merchant in the vicinity of Qutb. After this, there is hardly any relic to throw light on the history of Vaishṇavism during the Muhammadan rule, though it can be presumed that the Muslim occupation could not eradicate all the Hindu thoughts and religions, though the Islamic faith was also fast spreading in this region.

HARYANA

KURUKSHETRA in Haryana is one of the holiest places in India. It was named after the pious king Kuru of the Kaurava line. In the *Bhagavadgītā* and several other religious texts, it is called dharma-kshetra, the holy land. This name was also known to Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century as he calls it Le Champ du bonheur (Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, Vol. XIV, p.87; and Julien's *Hwen Thsang*, Vol.I I, pp. 212 and 213). This place is also called Chakratīrtha.

The oldest account of Kurukshetra is to be found in the *Mahābhārata*. "The tract between Ratnuk, Aratnuk, Rama-hrada and Bhachakruk is called Kurukshetra, Samantapañchaka and the northern Vedi of Brahmā." (Cunningham, *op. cit.*, 87). It is also described as the tract lying between the Sarasvatī and Drishadvatī rivers. "South from Sarasvatī and north from Drishadvatī, they who dwell in Kurukshetra live in paradise." Manu also calls it Brahmāvartta. "That region made by the god, which is between the Saraswatī and the Drishadvatī rivers is also called Brahmāvartta". (Cunningham, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 212-215).

Whatever it may be, the popularity of the name of Kurukshetra largely depends on its having been the scene of the Bhārata war which was an important event in the history of India. It is here that the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas fought for eighteen days. Krishṇa played an important role in the Bhārata war. The Pāṇḍavas could win it only through his help and advice. All the well-known warriors of the time, including Bhīshma, Droṇa, Karṇa, Bhūriśravā, Śalya, Abhimanyu and many others laid down their lives in the Bhārata battle. Duryodhana fought the *Gadāyuddha* here and with the former's death, the Kauravas lost their power. In fact the Kurukshetra War proved a doom to the Kshatriyas as a whole.

As is well known and stated above, Krishṇa delivered in Jyotisar (Kurukshetra) the message of the *Gītā* which advocates the principles of selfless Karma, jñāna and single-hearted devotion to god. The *Gītā* has exercised a profound influence on the minds of the Indian people. As a religious text it enjoys the highest popularity among the Hindus. Many Indian saints and philosophers including Śaṅkara, Ānandagiri, Madhva, Śrīdhara, and Baladeva Vidyā-bhushaṇa to name only a few, have written commentaries on it. Many commentaries are still being written and many would also be written in future but nothing would be able to exhaust the significance of the message of the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* is the epitome of Indian wisdom. And it is Krishṇa alone, the supreme reality, born as human being out of grace, who could expound this philosophy. How fortunate was Arjuna who received instructions directly from the Lord, symbolising humanity's endeavour to reach perfection! The essence of the *Gītā* is the right activity in harmony with the divine will (Annie Besant, *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavadgītā*, p. 46). "That is the only true definition of the right activity; not for fruit, not for desire for movement, not for attachment to any object or to any results of activity, but wholly in harmony with the will that works for universal good. Without attachment constantly perform action which is duty (iii. 19). That and that only is the right activity."

For the lack of sufficient historical and archaeological material, it is difficult to trace the history of Vishṇu-Krishṇa-cult in Haryana though it is sure that the hallowed memory of Krishṇa and his teachings were ever fresh in the minds of the people of this land.

Historically speaking, the earliest evidence of Vishṇuism in different parts of Haryana is provided by certain sealings (2nd-1st century B.C. to 1st-3rd centuries A.D.) with Vaishṇavite motifs, names and legends. Svāmī Omānanda in his book *Ancient Seals of Haryana*, Vikrama Samvat, 2031 has described a large number of such sealings from Haryana, throwing light as shown below, on our present subject. The sealings, nos. 30, 92, 101, 141, 149, 173, 178, 184, 199, 225, 226, 261, etc. from Sunet mention such Vaishṇavite names as Harivara, Vishṇu-soma, Vishṇu-bhadra, Vishṇu-simha, Krishṇadatta, Nārāyaṇa, Vishṇudatta, Vishṇudāsa, Krishṇaghosha, Harigupta, etc., indicating thereby the popularity of the cult in Haryana during the period in question. A clay seal from Agroha (seal No. 38) shows the *svastika* and *chakra* design. Besides the seals mentioned above there are

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certain clay seals containing the legend *Śrī jitam Bhagavataḥ Svāmi-Nārāyāṇasya* or *Śrī jitam Bhagavatā Svāmī-Nārāyaṇena*. This would suggest that about the third century there was in Sunet a temple of Nārāyaṇa (see also the *Vishvesvarananda Indological Journal*, Vol. X, p. 143). A sealing from Sunet in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, shows a *gadā*, *chakra* and *śaṅkha* and bears the legend Jayasvāmī in Gupta characters. (K. K. Thaplyal, *Studies in Ancient Indian seals*, Lucknow, 1972, p. 160). Another Indian Museum sealing from Sunet shows a *śaṅkha* on the pedestal and has the legend Śrīdevasya in Gupta characters (Thaplyal, *op. cit.*, p. 161).

Again, some of the sealings from Sunet contain the legend: Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇābhyām. These sealings were probably used as votive offerings to a temple which was dedicated both to Śiva (Śaṅkara) and Vishṇu (Nārāyaṇa), i.e. Harihara. This is quite possible that there was an image of Harihara enshrined in this temple (*Vishvesvarananda Indological Journal*, Vol. VIII, 1970, pp. 174 ff.).

Jhajjar Museum, Jhajjar, Haryana has in its collection three terracotta panels of about 3rd-4th century from Jind; one of them represents Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa, going to Pañchavaṭī, the second one, the Rākshasa Triśirā's preparations for fight, and the third one shows Mārīcha running in front of Rāma and Sītā.

That Vaishṇavism was popular during the Gupta times in Haryana is clearly evident from the Tusam Rock-inscription. Tusam is a village, some fourteen miles to the north-west of Bhiwani in Hissar district in Haryana. The inscription is engraved in the Gupta characters of the 5th century A.D. The text of this inscription is important and reproduced below (Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, pp. 269 and 270).

1. Jitam-abhikshṇam-eva Jāmbavatīvada-
nāravind-orijjit-āḷīṇa

2. dānav-āṅganā-mukhāmbhoja-lakshmī-
tushāreṇa Vishṇunā

3. Anekapurushābhyāgat-āryya Sātvata-
yogāchāryya-

4. bhagavadbhakta - Yaśastrāta-prapau-
trasy - āchāryya - Vishṇutrātapautrasy -
āchāryya-

5. Vasudatta-p[u]trasya Rāvaṇyām-utpan-
nasya Gotama-sagotrasyāchāryy-opād-
dhyāya-

6. Yaśastrāt [a] nujasy-āchāryya-Somatrā-
tasya=edam bhagavatpād-opayo-

7. jyam kuṇḍam-uparyy-āvasathaḥ ku-

8. ṇḍam ch=āparam.

This inscription contains an allusion to Vishṇu (Krishṇa) and Jāmbavatī (one of the favourite queens of Krishṇa), and refers to the construction of two reservoirs and a house by an Āchārya called Somatrāta for the use of Vishṇu called *Bhagavat* or the Divine one. Further, Somatrāta is described in the inscription as a highly esteemed Sāttvata and a devotee of the divine one. All this proves beyond doubt that the Tusam region was a centre of Vaishṇavism.

Further, it should be mentioned that about a foot below the last line of the inscription is engraved an emblem—which has been described by some scholars as a *dharma-chakra*. Fleet says that this symbol seems to have no connection with the present inscription and "it may belong to one of the shorter records, i.e. *Jitam bhagavatā bhagavat-pāda-deśe* ... which is engraved just above the present inscription, in large and somewhat irregular characters of about the same period." (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 269).

This short inscription containing also the adoration of Vishṇu further confirms the conclusion derived from the main Tusam inscription, described above, about the popularity of Vaishṇavism here during the rule of the Guptas who were ardent worshippers of Vishṇu.

The popularity of Vaishṇavism continued also in later periods. As an evidence for this we may refer to the beautiful four-armed image of Vishṇu found at Agroha and now preserved in the Punjab Museum, Chandigarh. Stylistically, it may be attributed to the 8th-9th century.

The Pehoa inscription from the temple of Garibnath throws considerable light on the history of Vaishṇavism in Pehoa and Kanauj. "The object of the inscription is to record the fact that certain pious horse-dealers who met at the horse fair at Pehoa—Prithūdaka agreed to impose upon themselves and upon their customers certain taxes and tithes, the proceeds of which were to be distributed among some temples, priest and sanctuaries, in proportions duly specified." (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, pp. 184-190). The institutions that benefited from this arrangement include the temple at Prithūdaka of Vishṇu in the Yajña-varāha form (boar-incarnation) built by the Brāhmaṇa Bhūvaka and its priest, besides the temple built by the illustrious Guhāditya at Kanauj, the temple built by Kadambāditya at Kanauj and the temple of Vishṇu-Garuḍāsana built by the Brāhmaṇa Bhūvaka, also at Kanauj (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, pp. 185 and 186). It shows that Brāhmaṇa Bhūvaka was a great devotee of Vishṇu. He is responsible for the construction of the Vishṇu temples, namely the Yajña-varāha temple in Pehoa and the Vishṇu-Garuḍāsana

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temple in Bhojpur near Kanauj. It also shows that Kanauj and Pehoa were very closely linked culturally during the period in question. The date of the inscription is Samvat 276, which according to Cunningham and George Bühler refers to Harsha era and corresponds to 882-83 (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 186). As to the King who ruled over Pehoa (Prithūdaka) at this time, he was perhaps the independent sovereign Bhoja as suggested by Bühler. The name of this Bhoja is mentioned also in the Deogarh inscription dated Samvat 919 and the Gwalior *praśasti* of 876 (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 186).

The Sirsā (Hissar) stone inscription of the 9th century (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, p. 20) throws some interesting light on the popularity of Krishṇa-Vishṇu worship in Haryana. Verses 30 and 31 of the inscription record that there were images of Krishṇa (the enemy of the demon Mura) united with Lakshmī (i.e. Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa) also in a Śiva temple. This shows the usual predominant position of the Vishṇu-worship in the frame-work of the *pañchopasanā*. In this connection we may also refer to the Bhatinda stone inscription of Rājā Śatrughnadeva (c. 10th century) which invokes Vishṇu and refers to his weapons as "Hari (Vishṇu) who with his hands holds a mace (*gadā*) and spotless Pāñchajanya (conch) and supports the three worlds with ease." (R. C. Agrawal, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, p. 20).

An undated *praśasti* from the reign of Mahendra Pāla of Kanauj, found in Pehoa (Prithūdaka) and ascribable to the early part of the 10th century is also of great interest to us. This inscription has been edited by George Bühler in the *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, pp. 242-251).

The inscription (verses 6-19) mentions certain members of the Tomara family, the last three of which, Gogga, Pūrṇarāja and Devarāja (all sons of Jajjuka) constructed, as it would seem, a triple temple of Vishṇu in Pehoa. Further, it begins with the adoration of Vishṇu as follows:

"Om! Adoration to Mādhava! May that Chief male (Purusha) protect you; he who, alone (remaining) sleeps, when the regent of the night (the moon) has disappeared, when the mountains have completely crumbled away, when the foe of darkness (the sun) has been destroyed, when mankind have been annihilated, when the host of stars has tumbled down, when the circle of the earth has fallen, and thus the oceans have become one." (Verse 1).

"May lovely Vishṇu's beautiful eye, that is pleasing through the quivering of the brow and charming with its resplendent pupil, protect all the three worlds-(the eye) of him who plunges into the ocean of the nascent deep love(of him) whose lustre (is increased by) the great splendour of Lakshmī's moon-like face, (of him) whose cheek is dimpled with smiles." (Verse 2).

Verse 3 of this inscription eulogises Kurukshetra, and verse 4, the Sarasvatī, which flows near Pehoa and verse 5 praises the ruling king of the country, Mahendrapāla, who without doubt belonged to Kanauj and was the successor of King Bhoja, who, according to the Pehoa grant of the horse-dealers ruled in A. D. 882 (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p. 244).

Some sculptures were recently found under a Pipal tree within the premises of a modern temple on the outskirts of the village Kohand in the Karnal District, Haryana. These sculptures must have belonged to a temple in the neighbourhood of the area. They include a sculpture of Brahmā seated on lotus, two heads of Śīva, a mithuna figure, a figure of Gaṅgā with attendant and the upper part of a four-armed Vishṇu image and a head of a Vishṇu. The upper right hand of the Vishṇu image holds the top end of a mace in between the thumb and the first finger, while the upper left holds a *chakra*. The traces of *vanamālā* are seen on the upper arms. On the top are both at the right and the left Vidyādhara figures holding garlands. The image can be attributed to about 10th century A. D. To the same period belongs also the head of Vishṇu. This figure which is damaged below the neck wears an elaborate faceted crown adorned with *Kīrtimukhas* and pearl festoons. The eyes are half closed in meditation (B. M. Pande, *Vishvesharananda Indological Journal*, Vol. VI, pp. 125-127).

Ganesh Hari Khare in his book *Mūrti-Vijñāna* (Bharat Itihasa Samsodhaka Mandala, Poona 1939, fig. 19) illustrates one Vaikuṇṭha Vishṇu or Vishṇu-chaturmukha. It is ascribable to c. 10th century. It has three faces, the middle face is human, the right face is of the lion and the left is of the boar. Prithvī is shown between the legs. It wears a crown. It is four-handed. The upper right holds *padma* and the lower right is placed on the head of the gadādevi personified. The upper left hand has *śaṅkha* and the lower left is placed on Chakrapurusha personified.

Shri Kishore Kumar Saxena in his article "Religious conditions of Kurukshetra in Early Medieval Period" (as gleaned from sculptural finds), *Journal of the Andhra Historicall Research Society*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 106-112, has described some Vaishṇavite sculptures from Haryana. The sculptures in question were found at a spot near Faridkot Gurudwara, 3 miles North-east to Kurukshetra Railway Station, situated on

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the bank of the river Sarasvatī. They include among other finds some Vishṇu images, including a Śeshaśāyī figure, ascribable to the medieval period.

Shri Saxena refers to the fact that the *Vāmana Purāṇa* which was composed in Kurukshetra in the 7th century shows the existence of both Śaivism and Vaishṇavism in Kurukshetra. Bāṇa, a court poet of Harsha, whose earlier capital was Sthāniśvara (Haryana), refers to the followers of Krishṇa along with the Buddhists, Jainas and other sects (E. W. Cowell and F. W. Thomas, *Harshacharita of Bāṇa*, Varanasi, 1961, p. 84). Hiuen Tsang has mentioned in his account 3 Buddhist monasteries containing 200 monks, one stupa and 100 Brahmanical temples and he has also mentioned that Vaishṇavism was a flourishing faith in the region (Watters, *Hiuen Thsang's Travels in India*, Delhi, 1961, p. 153).

Alberuni informs us that the city of Thanesar had an idol called Chakrasvāmī, i.e. Vishṇu who held *chakra* as his weapon. It was made of bronze and nearly the size of a man. As Alberuni states, Mahmud took it to Gazhni and it was thrown in the hippodrome of the town along with a part of the image of Somnatha (E. C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. I, p. 117 and *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, p. 18).

Further, some interesting Vishṇu sculptures were found from *Rājā Karaṇ Kā Kilā*. They include one Trivikrama Vishṇu, an image of three-faced Vishṇu, and an image of two-armed Sthānaka Vishṇu. All these sculptures can be attributed to about 11th century (for description, see *Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1922-23, pp. 89-91, and R. C. Agrawal, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 20 and 21).

PUNJAB

PUNJAB is now a truncated state. Firstly, it was divided into the West Punjab (now in Pakistan) and the East Punjab as a result of the partition of India in 1947. Thereafter, the creation of the states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh on linguistic basis further reduced the size of Punjab. Hence it is difficult to reconstruct the cultural history of Punjab, especially the history of Vaishṇavism with the very scanty material that is available on the theme within the geographical frontiers of the Punjab.

Generally speaking, Bhāgavatism which originated in Mathura spread all over India by the3rd-2nd century B. C., and the Punjab was no exception to it. Rather, the *Ashṭādhyāī* of Pāṇini who belonged to the north-west of India would show that the divinity or worship of Krishṇa was known to the undivided Punjab and the neighbouring region very early. It has been accepted by the old grammarians and many of our present day scholars that Pāṇini has indicated the divinity of Vāsudeva (Krishṇa) in the sūtra *Vāsudevārjunābhyām Vun* (IV. 3. 98). (P. Banerjee, *Early Indian Religions*, Delhi, 1973, pp. 62 and 63).

Pāṇini, according to the consensus of opinion, flourished not later than 500 B.C. Some scholars believe that he flourished several centuries earlier. Whatever it may be, on the basis of the preceding it can be argued that the Krishṇa cult was known to the ancient Punjab much earlier than many other parts of India. This seems to be corroborated also by the statement of Q. Curtius that an image of Herakles (Krishṇa) was carried in front of the army of Porus as he advanced against Alexander (later part of the fourth century B.C.). It is very consistent that Porus as a Paurava prince descended from the epic family of Arjuna, the incarnation of Nara and counterpart of Nārāyaṇa-Krishṇa, should have carried before his war-chariots the image of Krishṇa-Vāsudeva, the hero of Kurukshetra (P. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 72). That the Bhāgavata cult was known in Taxila in ancient times seems to be evident also from certain double-die square coins found here. On the obverse of these coins there is a symbol which Allan has interpreted as a pillar in a railing surmounted by a fish-like object (Allan, *Catalogue of Indian Coins, Ancient India*, British Museum, London, 1936, p. CXXXVI). Fish (or mīna) is associated with Pradyumna, son of Krishṇa and one of the four *Vyūhas* of the Bhāgavata cult. Therefore, these coins probably show the influence of Vaishṇavism at Taxila about the 3rd-2nd century B. C. The continuity of Vaishṇavite traditions in this region is provided also by several other facts. As is well known, one of the most important Bhāgavata records is the Garuḍa column of Besnagar which was erected in honour of Vāsudeva, the god of gods (Vāsudeva) by Heliodoros, son of Dion. Heliodoros is described as a worshipper of Bhagavat and a resident of Taxila. He came to the court of

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the Indian king Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra during the fourteenth year of his reign as an envoy from the Greek king Antialkidas, who on numismatic grounds can be placed between 175 B. C. to 135 B. C. This shows that Bhāgavatism was so popular in this region during the 2nd century B. C. that the foreigners were also attracted by it.

It is interesting to note that some silver coins of Agathocles (2nd century B. C.) found at Ai Khanoum, Bactria, bear the representation of Balarāma and Krishṇa, as identified by Professor Filliozat (*Arts Asiatiques*, Vol. XXXVI, 1973, p. 123).

Later, the foreign rulers, like the Śakas (88 B. C. to A. D. 19), continued to use Indian emblems on their coins. Some of these coins seem to bear Tyche holding in one hand a patera and in the other a wheel, which some scholars presume to be an early form of Vaishṇavī (*Vivekananda Commemoration Volume*, Madras, 1970, p. 140). It is also worth mentioning in this connection the bronze Vaikuṇṭha Vishṇu image (c. A. D. 200) preserved in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin. All this would show the popularity of the Vaishṇava tradition in the Punjab-Gandhāra region continuously from the early times to the Kushāṇa period.

The Gupta monarchs (5th century) were ardent devotees of Vishṇu-Krishṇa (in the inscriptions they are called Paramabhāgavatas). As a result of this, Vaishṇavism gained popularity throughout northern India including also the Punjab and a part of the Gandhāra region. In Taxila also, which was predominantly a centre of Buddhism, Vaishṇavism seems to have been popular. At Dharmarājika (Taxila) was discovered a pot-stone image of Vishṇu. He is four-armed and bears the usual attributes, the conch-shell, discus, club and lotus (Sir John Marshall, *Taxila*, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1951, P. 282). Stylistically the figure can be attributed to the 5th century (*Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1935-36, pl. 11 A).

Some Vaishṇavite finds of the medieval period have also been reported from within the geographical frontiers of the present-day Punjab itself. A four-armed standing figure of Vishṇu was discovered from Janer in the Ferozepur district and a similar figure was found in Mandian in the Kapurthala district. These sculptures which are with the Department of Archaeology and Tourism, Punjab, belong to c. 11th-12th century. *The Sunday Standard*, New Delhi, May 15, 1977 has reported the discovery of a Vishṇu head and a Vishṇu image from Dholbaha in the Hoshiarpur district. These pieces belong to about 10th-11th century. Excavations at Ghuram (a small village in Patiala district) have led to the discovery of a Śesha-śāyī Vishṇu, probably of the Gurjara-Pratihāra period (*The Times of India*, 7th November, 1976, p. 15).

Alberuni records that the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Vishṇu Purāṇa* were popular in India during his time. Perhaps, this information was chiefly collected by him from the Punjab. This evidence is supported by the existence of the temples associated with Vishṇu. 'In Multan, a place associated with the Narasimha (man-lion) avatāra of Vishṇu remained in existence throughout the medieval period'. (J. S. Grewal, *Guru Nānak in History*, Chandigarh, 1969, p. 117).

During the 15th and 16th centuries a strong Bhakti movement swept the whole of India. The Bhakti cult had a strong foot-hold also in the Punjab as the Sikh Gurus beginning with Nānak were not only great thinkers, but also great bhaktas. Like the medieval preacher, Kabir, Nānak did not believe in the external form of worship nor in the caste distinctions. Regarding the man's attitude and relationship to God, Guru Nānak and many Vaishṇava thinkers and devotees echo the same sentiment, i.e. man's true love to God should be like that of a devoted wife to her husband and man as His wife seeks union with Him or pines for Him " (J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, p. 193).

Guru Nānak was a liberal thinker and his compositions refer also to Hindu gods, Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva, though he considers only the Name of the True One as eternal (J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, p. 214). His attitude towards Islam is also similar. The mere allegiance to Islam, without right conduct cannot ensure salvation (J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, p. 228).

To Nānak devotion to god is the most supreme thing. It is to be preferred to any other thing in the world. Man's devotion should be exclusively directed to God. This single-hearted devotion to God is the keynote also in the Bhakti religion of the Vaishṇavas, as enunciated in the *Bhāgavata* and other *Purāṇas*, in Nārada's *Bhakti-Sūtras*, *Śāṇḍilya-Sūtram*, etc. This shows that Vaishṇava thoughts and ideas had a close impact also in the Punjab. The aspect of Bhakti which Nānak emphasised remained an important feature in the Sikh religion throughout.

Vaishṇavism gained in popularity in Punjab during the 16th-17th centuries. H. A. Rose has referred to a new Vaishṇava or Vairāgī movement introduced in Multan, Muzaffarabad, and Montgomery in the 16th century by Shamji and Lalji (*A Glossary of Tribes and Castes*, pp. 388-92). In the 17th century many Vaishṇavas came to the Punjab from Rajasthan and other places and many

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Vaishṇava shrines and *gaddīs* were established in Punjab which include the famous Vaishṇava *gaddīs* of Pindori and Dhianpur in Gurdaspur district and those at Wazirabad, Cheema Chattha, Jalalpur Bhattian, Gujarat and Narowal, and also those in the villages of the Bari, Rechna and Sindh Sagar doabs (J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, p. 119).

Pindori in the Gurdaspur district of the Punjab is an influential centre of Vaishṇavism and it is regarded as one of the fifty two Vaishṇavadvārās of the Vairāgī establishments. It is the *dvāra* of Bhagavān-Nārāiṇ after the names of its founder, Bhagavānji and his favourite disciple Nārāiṇji. Pindori is an imposing construction. Just at the heart of the Pindori establishment is the impressive Raghunāth temple. Bhagavānji is said to have been born at Kahnuwan, eight miles south of Pindori in the Gurdaspur district. His father was Tota Ram and his mother Maina. It is said that Tota Ram got Bhagvānji as a result of the blessings which he received from a *Jogi* of the Nāthapanthī order whose name is given as Tāra Nath. There is still at Kahnuwan an establishment of a *Jogi*. Bhagvanji was converted about 1621-22 to Vaishṇavism by Shri Krishṇadās Payahārī, whose seat was at Galta, Rajasthan. Krishṇadās was a disciple of Anantānanda who was on his turn one of the disciples of the celebrated Vaishṇava saint, Rāmānanda. Thus Bhagavānji was a Vaishṇava of Rāmānandī order (B. N. Goswami and J. S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishṇavas of Pindori*, Simla, 1969, pp. 8 and 9).

Krishṇadās was a powerful saint and out of his missionary zeal he came from Rajasthan to the hills to preach Vaishṇavism. Bhagvānji is shown in several paintings as preaching Vaishṇavism through music, like many of the Vaishṇava *bhaktas* of his times.

Bhagavānji and his disciple Nārāiṇji were known for their great spiritual powers and they attracted the notice of Emperor Jahangir also. The Emperor gave them land at Pindori where they established the well-known Vaishṇava *gaddī*. This *gaddī* won the respect of the hill chiefs of Chamba, Mankot, Bhandralala and Jammu. This *gaddī* during the Mahantship of Hari Ram established a branch at Damtal (Mira Seth, *Wall Paintings of the Western Himalayas*, Delhi, 1976, p. 28).

Nārāiṇji, disciple of Bhagavānji, was a great saintly figure of the Pindori *gaddī* and known for his miraculous power. It is said that Emperor Jahangīr gave him seven cups of poison which had no effect on him. This episode is delineated in many paintings and mentioned also in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangīrī* (B.N. Goswamy, and J. S. Grewal, *op. cit.*, 1969, p. 9).

The Pindori Maṭha was constructed with the gift of land from Jahangir in Vikrama Samvat 1679 (1622). Raghunāthji's temple which stands at the heart of the Pindori establishment was built in Vikrama Samvat 1872, corresponding to 1815-1816 during the Mahantship of Narottam Dās (1807-1843) with donations from the rulers of Kangra as well as from the Rajas of Kashmir. The walls of this temple are embellished with paintings in a style ascribable to 1816-1830. There is some amount of Mughal influence in these paintings.

Most of the Pindori paintings relate to the legends of Krishṇa's life, i.e. Krishṇa's birth in Kamsa's prison, Vasudeva carrying over his head Krishṇa and crossing Yamunā to reach Gokula, Kamsa's men slaying Yogamāyā, etc.

There is also another set of paintings devoted to the Krishṇa theme. In one panel is depicted Krishṇa sucking Pūtanā to death. The other panels show Krishṇa sporting with the Gopas and Gopīs; Krishṇa and Gopas; Rādhā dressed as a policeman and apprehending Krishṇa, Rādhā and Krishṇa enjoying in a forest; the marriage of Krishṇa with Rukmiṇī; Krishṇa sending a message to Rukmiṇī, etc. (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 66 ff).

Baba Mahesh Das was a great Vaishṇava saint and he is said to have been a very close associate of Bhagavānji but he refused to ascend the *gaddī*. His *samādhi* contains some illustrations of Krishṇa with the Gopīs and Krishṇa with Rādhā. In one panel Krishṇa is shown fighting with the Rākshasas. The Matsya and Narasimha incarnations of Vishṇu also are depicted (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 and 71).

The popularity of Vaishṇavism in the Punjab is also attested by the paintings in the Shish Mahal of the old Moti Mahal Palace. The Shish Mahal of the old Moti Mahal Palace in Patiala, constructed in about 1840, has paintings in the decadent Pahari style. The main interest of these paintings, however, is the theme of Krishṇa. The childhood of Krishṇa is shown through various illustrations, such as Krishṇa stealing butter, Krishṇa going out of home with his cowherds while mother Yaśodā is watching him from her place and Krishṇa playing hide and seek with the cowherds. Krishṇa's love of the Gopīs is depicted by such scenes as his sports with the Gopīs in the forest, stealing their clothes while they were taking bath in the river Yamunā, etc. The *Nayāka-Nāyikā-bheda* theme is also illustrated with Rādhā waiting for Krishṇa or going out to meet him at night, afflicted by pangs of separation. The other Vaishṇava theme depicted here includes the delineation of the Narasimha, Matsya and Varāha avatāras, Hanumān paying homage to Rāma and Sītā and the *Samudramanthana* theme, etc. (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 88 and 89).

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HIMACHAL PRADESH

THERE are many standing Vaishṇava shrines in different parts of Himachal Pradesh which would indicate that Vaishṇavism had been popular here since the 8th-9th century A. D. Though it is not possible precisely to say when first this cult was introduced in the Hill States, one may presume that its popularity started here with the expansion of the Gupta influence (it is well known that the Gupta rulers were parama-bhāgavatas). On a rock behind the famous temple of Raghunātha in the village Devaprayāga there is a Brāhmī inscription recording the name Chaturvyūha. The inscription is palaeographically acribable to the 2nd to 5th century. Chaturvyūha is a Vaishṇavite name which may indicate the presence of Vaishṇava influence in the locality during the period (S. Jaiswal, *op. cit.*, p. 178). One of the earliest Vishṇu images of the State is the Vaikuṇṭha Viśvarūpa-Vishṇu from Bajaura, Kulu. Stylistically it can be attributed to c. 8th century, as it retains all the later Gupta art idioms (V. C. Ohri, *Arts of Himachal*, Simla, 1975, p. 120). Of more or less the same period is the Vaikuṇṭhamūrti from the village Hat, near Bajaura, in the Kulu district (Ohri, *op. cit.*, p. 140). The Sirmur district has yielded a Vishṇu figure with flying Gandharvas ascribable to about 9th-10th century (*Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1956-57, p. 50). This sculpture is now preserved in the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba (Acc. No. 57.7).

Vishṇu images of the Pratihāra style have been found in different places in the State. Of them mention may be made of Vishṇu with Lakshmī on Garuḍa (c. 10th century) under worship at Hat Koti, Simla district (Ohri, *op. cit.*, p. 134), Vishṇu and Lakshmī, seated on Garuḍa (c. 10th century), under worship, Thakurdwara, at Nirmand, Kulu district (Ohri, *op. cit.*, p. 147) and two well-executed figures of the same subject, under worship at Mamel, Karsog, Mandi district (c. 10th-11th century, Ohri, *op. cit.*, p. 153). Again, it may be mentioned that Himachal Pradesh has yielded many bronze images of Vishṇu, especially the Vāsudeva-Kamalajā type ascribable to the 9th-10th centuries and also later. From the preceding it is clear that the Vaishṇava cult was popular in different parts of the State from the 8th century onwards.

There is evidence to show that Chamba and Brahmor were important centres of Vaishṇavism side by side with Śaivism during the medieval period. The early history of Chamba is not known though it can be presumed that it formed a part of the empire of the Maurya, Kushāṇa and Gupta kings.

The Lakshaṇādevī temple at Brahmor (c. 8th-9th century) is a Devi temple, but the gable of the temple contains in an arch a figure of Vishṇu, seated on Garuḍa; on either side is standing an attendant with a *chāmara*. The deity has, as usual, three faces (lion, human and boar). Originally he had twelve arms, symbolic of his power; now most of the arms are lost. The existing arms carry the attributes, such as a parasol, mace or lotus flower, an arrow, trident, disc and a bow, etc. (H. Goetz, *Early Wooden Temples of Chamba*, Leiden, 1955, p. 77).

The Markuladevī (Kālī) Temple at Markula-Udaipur in Lahul contains on its architraves various scenes from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The reliefs of the architraves on the eastern side show two warriors standing on their chariots and shooting arrows at each other. The right chariot has a *Kapidhvaja* (a standard with a monkey figure). Behind the warrior is seated Vishṇu-Krishṇa on Garuḍa. This warrior has been identified by Vogel as Arjuna and his opponent as Karṇa (H. Goetz, *op. cit.*, p. 91). Between these two warriors, there is a 'a tower like structure'. Beneath it are fighting two foot soldiers armed with a sword and a shield. "The next scene depicts a double row of animals, one row placed on top of the other, each consisting of three bullocks, two horses and two camels, with a driver behind; perhaps the capture of king Virāṭa's cattle by the Kauravas (*Goharaṇa Parva*). In the last scene a warrior is shooting an arrow from his chariot at five opponents (similar position, but seen from the back); between them there are two cows and four flying birds, placed one above the other. The scene probably represents Duryodhana or some other Kaurava hero (Droṇa, Karṇa or Suśarman, king of Trigarta) attacking the five Pāṇḍavas (H. Goetz, *op. cit.*, p. 91).

The relief-frieze on the western side represents scenes from the *Sundarakāṇḍa* and the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The frieze on the northern side shows the *Svayaṁvara* of Draupadī. Drupada and his queen are seated on a throne and they are attended by a female with a *chāmara*. On both the sides five Pāṇḍavas are shown standing, on the right are three, two with a sword and one with a mace; on the left are shown two, one with a sword and the other with a bow and arrow (Arjuna). Opposite the

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Rādhā and Krishṇa meeting in the moon-lit night, Kangra Style, c. 1800, Municipal Museum, Allahabad.

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king Drupada stands a lady with folded hands, who is perhaps Draupadī. The next scene shows an archer hitting a fish on a pole and the hero is probably Arjuna. Next, Arjuna bends his bow and there is in front of him a kneeling figure (Krishṇa?), touching with his left hand the lower end of the bow. Over the latter figure is Vishṇu on Garuḍa. The following scene shows five persons standing in a row, each with a staff and a parasol respectively in his right and left hands. "The sixth group depicts the *Rājyābhisheka*, the anointment of the new king, attended by four priests of whom one is pouring water from a vessel over his head and another is fanning him. Another person, to the left of the group, salutes the king with raised arm. In the last scene Arjuna (?) standing on his chariot fights with three opponents, probably Karṇa, Bhīshma and Śalya" (H. Goetz, *op. cit.*, p. 93).

The relief of the eastern side of the Markuladevī temple represents Trivikrama incarnation of Vishṇu, with his outstretched legs. His right leg touched the nether region peopled by the Nāgas and his left foot reached the heaven of Brahmā. Beneath Trivikrama, Vishṇu as Vāmana is depicted. He stands in his dwarfish form with a parasol in his left hand before Balī, the demon king, seated on a small throne. Vāmana asks for three steps of ground which Balī grants. Suddenly Vishṇu changes his Vāmana form, and becomes Trivikrama with three faces (i.e. lion, human and boar). The panel on the opposite (western) side of the window portrays the churning of the ocean (*Samudramanthana*) and the defeat of the Asuras (H. Goetz, *op. cit.*, pp. 93 and 94).

Chamba became an important centre of the Vaishṇava religion during the 10th century or so onwards. In Chamba there is a group of six stone temples arranged in a row from the north to south. Three of these temples are dedicated to Vishṇu and three to Śiva. Northernmost is the principal temple of Chamba, i.e. the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa Temple. It contains an image of white marble presented by various Rajas. King Sahillavarman, one of the distant descendants of Meruvarman, is the founder of this temple and his son Yugākaravarman is credited with having brought the marble for the image from the Vindhyas (J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba*, Vol. 1, p. 10).

Near the Chaugan gate, there is another Vishṇu temple called Hari Rai Temple. From a copper plate granted by Somavarman, but issued in the 1st year of his successor Āsaṭa it is evident that the temple was erected in the second half of the 11th century by one Lakshmaṇa-varman, who was probably a scion of the ruling house (*Ibid.*). The image of Vishṇu enshrined in the temple is of the Vishṇu Vaikuṇṭha type. It is one of the most beautiful specimens of the Vishṇu images of this type ever found. The central face of the figure is a placid human face and on his right is the face of a lion (representing Saṅkarshaṇa) and the one on his left is of a boar representing Aniruddha. The face on the back is demoniac, representing perhaps Pradyumna or Kapila. The figure is bejewelled and clad in a *dhoti;* between the legs is the goddess Prithvī. It wears a beautiful three-pronged crown and a long *Vaijayantīmālā*. The deity has four hands, two of his lower hands are placed on the Gadādevī and Chakra Purusha. The upper right hand holds stalk of a full-blossomed lotus and the corresponding left a conch-shell (Ohri, *op. cit.*, fig. 1). The figure is ascribable to c. 10th-11th century.

The *Vaṁśāvalī* of Chamba is an important source of the history of Chamba. Though the document seems to be of recent origin, its historical importance has been recognised by the historians. This *Vaṁśāvalī* opens with an obeisance to Nārāyaṇa. It may be mentioned here that the consecration of the idol of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa is an important factor in the religious history of Chamba. Since then, Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa became the patron deity of the Chamba State.

The *Vaṁśāvalī* refers to the difficulties in obtaining the marble for the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa image. It is said that Sāhilla sent nine of his sons to bring the marble for the image. The marble that they brought was defective. But when they were sent again, they were all killed by the robbers on the way. Then Yugākara, the last son, was sent. He slew the enemies from Mukuṭa-Koṭa and returned with precious black and white marble. According to Vogel, the mention of Mukuṭa-Koṭa is significant, as one of the Chamba inscriptions (no. 17) also refers to a locality call Makuṭa, apparently the ancient name of Tur. "This place lies on the road to the Baleni Pass, a much frequented route into Kangra. If we may identify Mukuṭa-Koṭa with this Makuṭa, it would follow that Yugākara marched into Kangra and it is quite questionable whether he went much farther to obtain his piece of marble. It is a curious coincidence that according to a tradition existing in Kangra, the famous idol of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa came originally from that place." (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 100). Yugākara's own records do not mention this event. Tradition, however, credits him with the founding of the Gaurī-Śaṅkara temple. It is, however, interesting to note that Yugākara's copper plate opens with a stanza in honour of Śiva, though it was issued to Narasimha, the man-lion incarnation of Vishṇu (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, pp. 100 and 101).

Regarding the continuity of the popularity of Vaishṇavism in Chamba we get some

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valuable information from the Chamba inscriptions (J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba*, Vol. I, pp. 187 ff).

The copper plate grant No. 25 granted by Somavarman and issued in the first year of Asaṭa (11th century) containing the signature of both the rulers records the donation of land in various villages round the capital to two temples of Vishṇu and Śiva; one of the Vishṇu temples is perhaps the temple of Hari Rai, mentioned above. The inscription opens with an invocation to Śiva followed by a praise of Krishṇa as the enemy of Mura (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 ff). The inscription states "... out of these (lands) the two bhūmāshakas of the son of Lutthuka on the road to Mangala in Parakamaṭa are bestowed as an *agrahāra* on the Lord Vishṇu founded here by order of the illustrious Pāsaṭa, the son of Mahārāja." (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 196).

In the Devī-rī-Koṭhī Fountain enclosure was found a stone figure of Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa inscribed. The image is now preserved in the Chamba Museum. The deity has three faces, the side faces being those of a lion and a boar. He is seated on Garuḍa holding Lakshmī on his left arm and a mace in his right hand. The inscription on the pedestal says that this image of God Nārāyaṇa was caused to be made by the Rāṇā, the illustrious Nāga Pāla. The image was made by the artisan Sabhaga, the son of Uda (12th century) (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 208).

The Fountain Inscription of Rājānaka Nāga Pāla of the 17th year of Lalitavarman (A.D. 1159-61) from Devī-rī-Koṭhī is also a very important one for our purpose. It is carved on a stone slab 'which originally might have stood to the proper left of the Nārāyaṇa image', described above. The verse of the inscription describes Nāga Pāla who may be clearly identified with the Rājānaka Nāga Pāla of the Nārāyaṇa Image Inscription. As the present inscription describes, Nāga Pāla's mother was a very pious lady. After her husband's death she observed various fasts and brought up her sons with great care. She increased her charity, her compassion for the poor and her devotion to Krishṇa (dīne dayām cha Mura-vairiṇī (chaiva) bhaktim) (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, pp. 211–212).

The Sālhī Fountain Inscription of Rājānaka Ludrapāla of the 27th year of Lalitavarman (A.D. 1170) which is inscribed on a very big slab contains among other deities the representation of the Śesha-śāyī-Vishṇu. Vishṇu is three-faced, his right and left faces are those of a lion and a boar.

This feature Vishṇu has in common with the Buddhist goddess Mārīchī and Vajravārāhī. Vishṇu here is as usual four-armed and has the well-known attributes, the *padma*, *chakra*, *śaṅkha* and *gadā*. Brahmā rises from his navel. Lakshmī standing in his front fans him with a *chāmara*. "The inscription over his head runs śisha-sāyī (read śesha-śāyī) Vishṇu which means "Vishṇu resting on Śesha." The substitution of i for e is peculiarity of Sanskrit pronunciation in Kashmir, and seems to point to the author of the inscription having come from that country (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 219).

At Sāho there is a small shrine containing an image of Vishṇu with three faces (the side faces being as usual of a lion and a boar). "The halo is besmeared with Ganges sand." Vogel describes the image as follows: "The deity is standing with two of his four hands resting on the heads of a pair of miniature Chowrie carriers. Of the remaining two hands the right one holds a lotus flower and the left one is broken. The bust of a female figurine, said to represent Lakshmī, issues from the base between his two feet. In most points the image resembles the inscribed brass statue of Vishṇu from Fatehpur, Kangra district, now preserved in the Lahore Museum. (*Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1904-05, p. 109). Behind the Chowrie bearers a second pair of attendants are visible. The rest of the slab is carved with miniature figures, all of which are more or less defaced. The two-armed figurines seated on both sides of the head of Vishṇu appear to be Brahmā and Śiva, thus indicating him as the principal person of the Hindu Triad. The remaining figures I take to represent the ten incarnations of Vishṇu..." (J. Ph. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 248).

The massive popularity of the Krishṇa cult in the later centuries (17th to 19th) in the State is evident from the wall paintings and the miniature paintings produced in the different centres of Himachal Pradesh. Krishṇa's early life and his relations with Rādhā are the dominating theme of these paintings. The Pahari artists have delineated the theme with great devotion and ability. It is needless here to dwell on the contribution of the Pahari miniatures to the popularity of this theme as the subject is very well known. But it may be appropriate to deal with the wall paintings devoted to the Krishṇa Cult in the State. One of the main features of this religion is love and devotion both of which are necessary to understand the mysteries of the Krishṇa cult. Both Rajasthani and Pahari paintings depict various nuances of love and devotion centring round Kirshṇa.

One of the reasons of the popularity of the Krishṇa cult in the State is the arrival of many prominent Vairāgis from the other States of India. They established many Maṭhas which played a very important role in the religious life of the people. Shrī Kirshṇadāsa Pūjārī

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or Payahārī belonging to the Galta *gaddi* (seat) in Rajasthan visited the hills and converted Bhagavānji, the founder of the Pindori Darbar. Krishṇadāsa who was a disciple of Anantānanda, one of the disciples of Saint Rāmānanda, seems to have been a very influential Vairāgī. He is said to have also gone to Kulu and established a centre at Nagar (Mira Seth, *Wall-paintings of the Western Himalayas*, Delhi, 1976, p. 2 8).

The Pindori Maṭha founded by Bhagavānjī, disciple of Kirshṇadāsa, and Nārāiṇji established its branches in Damtal and at Baithu in Guler during the period of Mahant Rām Dās about 1736 and 37.

Another important Vairagī who also came from Rajasthan, i.e. Jaipur, was Bawa Banarsi Das. He erected the tower at Sirmur. Again, many Puṇḍits also came from Banaras, and Kashmir to preach Vaishṇavisim in the Hills (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 28 and 29).

The illustrations of the Krishṇa theme in the wall paintings include mostly the exploits of his early life, his relations with the Gopīs and especially Rādhā, and also some of his later scenes occurring in the *Mahābhārata* as well as those situations portrayed in the *Rītikāvya* of the 16th and subsequent centuries.

The main centres of wall-paintings on the Krishṇa theme in Himachal Pradesh are Nurpur (Kangra district), Nadaun, Sujanpur-Tira (Narmadeśvara Temple,) Damtal, Dharamsala, Dādā Siba, Gopal Mandir, Shogi, Simla district, Devī-rī-Kothī, Chamba district, and Rang Mahal, Chamba, Arki, etc.

The Thakurdvārā of Nurpur also known as Krishṇa's shrine is emellished with wall-paintings, attributable to the last quarter of the 18th century, and some scholars think that they were executed during the time of Raja Bīr Singh (1789-1846) (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 43).

The Nurpur shrine is a double storeyed one. On the ground floor the verandah was lavishly painted and most of it is now obliterated. The artist was one Tarkhan, called Golu, who seems to have been a gifted person. The main painting in verandah was the theme of Krishṇa's victory over Kamsa. Among other illustrations, mention may be made of the coronation of Krishṇa, Krishṇa with the Gopīs, etc.

Sujanpur-Tira had three important temples, like the Gaurī Shankar, Muralī Manohar, and Narmadeśvara.

The Narmadeśvara temple was built by Rani Prasani Devi, wife of Raja Sansarchand of Kangra (1776 - 1823). It is situated on the bank of the Beas. This temple contains paintings both Śaivite and Vaishṇavite. Regarding Krishṇaite scenes, mention may be made of Yaśodā holding Krishṇa in her arms, Krishṇa sucking Pūtanā to death, Rādhā and Krishṇa in a forest, Krishṇa playing his flute, the Govardhana-dhāraṇa scene, etc.

Narmadeśvara is one of the few places where Krishṇa is represented as a king. He is seen sitting on a throne and listening to music. Two panels portray Krishṇa and Sudāmā in an effective manner. In one, Sudāmā enters Krishṇa's darbar looking with wonder at Krishṇa seated on a throne with Rukmiṇī. In the second panel, Sudāmā on his return looks at a grand palace which in his absence had sprung up in the place of his simple hut. Another interesting scene depicted in Narmadeśvara is Draupadī's *chīraharaṇa*. Draupadī is praying to Krishṇa while some one is pulling her *oḍhṇī*. In the background are the puzzled Pāṇḍavas (*op. cit.*, p. 49).

The Damtal Maṭha in the Nurpur Teshil of the Kangra district, according to the present Mahant, was built by Bhagavān Nārāiṇji, a Vairāgī of the Rāmānanda Sampradāya about Samvat 1500=A.D. 1442. According to local traditions, it was built at the time of Jahangir at whose instance the Vairāgī drank poison but survived as a result of his mystical power. J. C. French, however, dates the paintings of the Maṭha about 1690 i.e. of the time of Aurangzeb. According to Dr. Mira Seth, the paintings were executed during the early part of the nineteenth century (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 28ff). The Damtal Maṭha is a two-storeyed building. The walls of the big verandah of the ground floor are embellished with paintings done (in niches) in Mughal fashion. The paintings illustrate the legends of Śiva, Rāma and Krishṇa. The Krishṇa theme includes the Girigovardhana scene, Krishṇa touching the feet of Rādhā who is sitting on her bed as a *Māniṇī nāyikā*, Krishṇa playing with the cowherd boys, Krishṇa riding his chariot to join the Kurukshetra war, Krishṇa delivering his famous message to Arjuna and some scenes of fighting between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. Besides these, are scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* including Sītā's *Svayaṁvara*, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa preparing for war with Rāvaṇa after Sītā's abduction, the return of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā after the exile period is over (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, p. 54). The walls of the first floor of the Maṭha are mainly devoted to the *Rāmāyaṇa* theme, and Krishṇa holding Girigovardhana, etc.

On the walls of a room adjoining the verandah of the Sultanpur palace, Kulu, occur some *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes and the Vaishṇava theme called *Nāyaka-nāyikā Bheda* (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, p 78).

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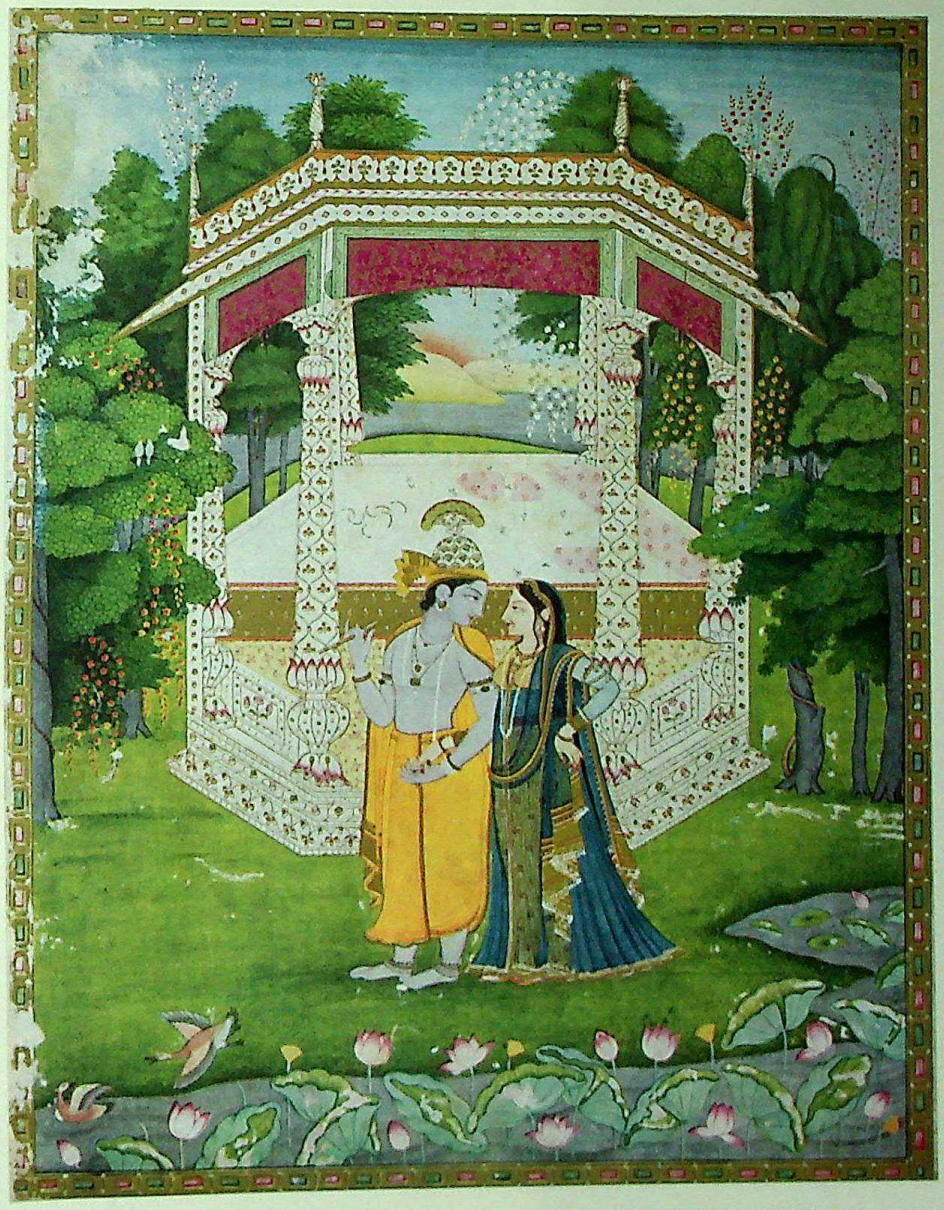

Rādhā and Krishṇa coming out of the garden pavilion, Kangra Style, c. 1810, after plate XX, Kangra Paintings on Love by Dr. M. S. Randhawa.

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In Chamba there are two centres of wall-paintings, the older ones are to be found in the temple of Devī-rī-koṭhi. This temple was perhaps constructed by Raja Umed Singh in A.D. 1754. The temple is dedicated to Devī, but apart from the Śākta scenes, there occur here many legends of Krishṇa's life from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, such as Krishṇa playing with the Gopīs, etc.

The Rang Mahal Palace was begun by Raja Umed Singh (1748-64). It was used as the residence of the women of the Chamba royal family till 1947. The Rang Mahal palace was lavishly decorated with paintings which have now been shifted to the National Museum, New Delhi. The theme of the paintings includes the legends of Śiva, Rāma and Krishṇa. The Krishṇaite scenes show among others, Kıishṇa's life in Vrindavana, his dalliance with the Gopīs, especially with Rādhā, child Krishṇa playing with Nanda, Yaśodā and Balarāma, Krishṇa upholding the Giri-govardhana, Krishṇa stealing the clothes of the Gopīs, etc. (Mira Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 81 ff).

The facts stated above indicate the widespread popularity of the Krishṇa cult in the Himachal Pradesh during the late Mughal periods. The popularity of the religion is still continuing unabated in the State.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

VAISHṆAVISM flourished in Kashmir side by side with Śaivism and Buddhism. The main source of the history of Kashmir Vaishṇavism is the *Nīlamata Purāṇa*, Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* and the archaeological relics and local traditions. Vaishṇava mythologies and the Krishṇa tradition were popular here quite early in its history.

As it is stated in the *Purāṇas*, Gonanda, the king of Kashmir, joined Jarāsandha when the latter attacked Mathura to avenge the death of his son-in-law Kamsa. Gonanda was killed by Balarāma. If we believe in the *Nīlamata Purāṇa* (a text of c. ninth century), Gonanda's son Dāmodara fought Krishṇa when he came to Gandhāra to seek the hand of the Gandhāra princess on the occasion of her *Svayaṁvara*. Mādhava (Krishṇa) killed him and placed his pregnant wife on the throne of Kashmir so that her posthumous son could rule the country in the course of time (*Nīlamata Purāṇa*, edited by Ved Kumari, Vol. I, Motilal Banarasidass, 1968, vv. 6-9). When the child was born he was called Gonanda II. He was very young when the Mahābhārata war was fought and it is why his help was sought neither by the Kauravas nor by the Pāṇḍavas.

This *Purāṇa* extols the greatness of Vishṇu as the source of the universe and pervading it and mentions many episodes connected with Vishṇu and Krishṇa. It refers to the hostility of the Nāgas and Garuḍa; Vāsuki approached Janārdana for the protection of the Nāgas from the onslaught of Garuḍa. Janārdana assured that those who would take shelter in the country of Satīsara (the Kashmir valley) would be protected.

Certain geographical names are also suggestive of Vaishṇava influence in Kashmir at remote times. For example, the extensive mountain lake in the Pirpanjal area is still known as Vishṇupada. Again, some small lakes are called Vishṇasar, Rāmardhan, Krishṇasar, etc.

There is, however, not much material to throw light on the history of Vaishṇavism in Kashmir till we come to the 6th century A.D. Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* which is a text of the twelfth century but records earlier history and tradition tells us that Mātrigupta who was the governor of Kashmir during the time of king Vikramāditya stopped the slaughter of animals and built a shrine of Madhusūdana, called Mātriguptasvāmin temple. Mātrigupta has been placed at about 580 by certain scholars (P. N. K. Bambzai, *A History of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1973, pp. 83 ff). Pravarasena II who is said to be the founder of Srinagar was a brave and virtuous king. He is said to have consecrated an image of Vishṇu called Jayasvāmin. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* states that Pravarasena II built the city called Pravarapura: "When he was first about to consecrate (the *Liṅga*) of Pravareśvara in pious devotion, the (image of Vishṇu) Jayasvāmin seated itself of its own accord on the base (*pīṭha*) after breaking the sacred diagram (*yantra*). This (image of Vishṇu) was called by the king after the name of the architect Jaya who knew the auspicious time, *lagna* ..." (Stein, Kalhaṇa's *Rāja-*

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taraṅgiṇī (English translation), III, 350-351). Pravarasena who flourished after Mātrigupta might have lived towards the end of the sixth century. This indicates that Vaishṇavism became so popular that its adherents forced the king to consecrate Vishṇu temples along with those of Śiva. A similar event took place in the reign of Raṇāditya to whom the tradition attributes an incredible reign of 300 years. Raṇārambhā, the queen of Raṇāditya, was a pious lady and an ardent devotee of Vishṇu, and with her influence and prayers the Śiva temple got consecrated as a Vishṇu shrine. "When the auspicious time (*lagna*) for the consecration was at hand, and when the king being of the Śaiva persuasion (Māheśvara), was just preparing to consecrate first the (*Liṅga* of) Raṇeśvara, the (image of) Raṇasvāmin (Vishṇu called Raṇasvāmin) through the power of Raṇārambhā seated itself miraculously on the base (*pīṭha*), after breaking the sacred diagram (*yantra*)" (Stein, *op. cit.*, III, 453-454).

The Raṇasvāmi temple seems to have been a very important shrine as it is mentioned also in the other texts, including Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's *Āgamāḍambara* and the *Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* of Maṅkha. According to Kalhaṇa, the shrine was visited by Chakravarman's queen in the month of Māgha (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, V. 395) which is the time for the greatest snowfall in the valley. (Chakravarmā ruled Kashmir in the tenth century.) From this it can be judged that the temple might have been situated very near the palace complex. Maṅkha in his *Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* speaks of his father's visit to the temple and Jonarāja in his commentary calls it the chief deity of Pravarapura (*Śrī Pravarapura-pradhāna-devatā*). Thus it appears that the temple of Raṇasvāmī seems to have enjoyed a great celebrity. About its possible location Stein says, "It owes the partial preservation to the fact that it has been utilised by the Muhammadans as the Zirat of Pīr Hāzi Muhammad Sāhib. Besides the walls of a raised octagonal cella and the stairs leading to its two doors, the enclosing walls and the gateways of the ancient court-yard are yet standing. The building has not been noticed in any of the papers dealing with the remains of the ancient architecture of Kashmir."

"If the Lacham Kul ended in old days further N in the branch which flows into the Dal lake near the Buṭakadal we might look for the Raṇasvāmin among the numerous ruins of ancient temples found about the mosque of Māḍīn Sahib in the north part of Sangin Darwaza.

P. Sahibram in his *Tīrthas*, briefly refers to the 'Raṇasvāmī Vishṇu' to the W. of the Haraparvat without giving any further hint as to its position." (Stein, *op. cit.*, Third Book, p. 112, notes).

Vaishṇavism gained much popularity during the rule of the Kārkoṭaka dynasty. According to Kalhaṇa Durlabhavardhana had a rule of thirty-six years during which period Hiuen Tsang visited Kashmir (631-633) (Stein, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 87). A son of the king, called Malhaṇa, knowing the shortness of his life, as it was predicted by an astrologer, built, when he was yet a boy, a shrine of Vishṇu called Malhaṇasvāmī. Durlabhavardhana himself, before his death, consecrated at Śrīnagarī the shrine of Durlabhasvāmin (Stein, *op. cit.*, IV. 4-6). Chandrāpīḍa, who was also called Vajrāditya, purified the earth, as it is said in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* by the consecration of the shrine of Vishṇu Tribhuvanasvāmī (Stein, *op. cit.*, IV. 78) The examples of Chandrāpīḍa were followed by his guru, Mihiradatta, who built the temple of Vishṇu Gambhīrasvāmin, and also by his city-prefect, called Chalitaka who erected the temple of Vishṇu Chalitakasvāmin (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV. 80 and 81).

Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa (who ruled between 724-761) was the youngest son of Pratāpāditya. He is one of the most celebrated kings of Kashmir. He was a warrior and a great conqueror. He carried his arms far and wide. It is said that he brought under his control the Punjab, Kanauj, Tibet and Badakshan, besides several other territories. He was, however, a generous king and tolerant towards all religions. He built many towns and erected several shrines. His great glory is the world famous Mārtaṇḍa temple (dedicated to the sun-god) which set a model for the Hindu architecture of Kashmir for several hundred years.

Lalitāditya was a great patron of Vaishṇavism and erected Vishṇu temples in various places. "When he had resolved (*kritaniśchaya*) upon the conquest of the world, he built the (town called) Suniśchitapura, feeling proud, he built Darpitapura with a (shrine) of Keśava (Vishṇu) (Stein, *op. cit.*, IV. 183). He placed an image of Nrisimha (Vishṇu) in the land of amazons (Strīrājya) and the image was suspended in the air (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV. 185). At Huskapur he built a Vihāra with a stupa as well as a magnificent temple of Vishṇu Muktāsvāmī (*Ibid.*, IV. 188). He erected here also a gold image of Vishṇu Muktākeśava which shone "as if it had taken its lustre from the many stamina of the lotus (rising from Vishṇu's navel)" (*Ibid.*, IV. 196). He built a town at Lokapuṇya and made an offering of it to Vishṇu (*Ibid.*, IV, 193). He built the splendid town of Parihāsakeśava and embellished it with a silver statue of Vishṇu (*Ibid.*, IV. 195). He built a golden image of Mahāvarāha (*Ibid.*, IV. 197) and a silver image of Govardhanadhara, i.e. Krishṇa upholding the mountain Govardhana (*Ibid.*, IV. 198) to save the Gopas and Gopīs from the heavy downpour caused by Indra.

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He also built a stone building by the side of the temple of Vishṇu Parihāsakeśava and consecrated therein an image of Rāmasvāmin (*Ibid.*, IV. 275). Again, he erected a great stone pillar, fifty-four hands high, surmounted by Garuḍa, the standard of Vishṇu, the enemy of the Daityas (*Ibid.*, IV. 199).

Apart from these, the image of Vishṇu occurs in the sculptural embellishments of the Mārtaṇḍa temple, built by Lalitāditya.

There is a three-headed seated deity representing Vishṇu with a wheel and conch shell as two of the attributes inside a trefoil niche in the temple. Again, the northern-wall of the maṇḍapa of the Mārtaṇḍa temple contains a figure of Viśvarūpa Vishṇu. It is a four-faced figure, the fourth figure being not visible. The other heads are the central placid head of Vāsudeva and two side-heads, the head of the lion standing for Saṅkarshaṇa and the boar-like head representing Aniruddha. Between the legs of the deity appears the bust of Prithvī. The attributes in the hands are not distinct. Anyhow the above description establishes beyond doubt the identification of the figure as Viśvarūpa Vishṇu (Debala Mitra, *Pandrethan, Avantipur* and *Mārtand*, Archaeological Survey of India, 1977, pp. 97-101). This shows the popularity of Vaishṇavism in Kashmir during this time.

Lalitāditya's zeal for Vaishṇavism was followed by his queens and courtiers. His queen Kamlāvatī set up a large silver image of Kamlākeśava. The king of Lāṭa, called Kayya who seems to have been his feudatory, built the famous (shrine of Vishṇu) called Kayyasvāmin (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV. 208-209). The queen Chakramardikā built a temple in which the image of Lakshmaṇasvāmin was placed (*Ibid.*, IV. 276). Some of the later Kārkoṭa kings also showed patronage to Vaishṇavism. Jayāpīḍa, the grandson of Lalitāditya established the shrine of Vipulakeśava (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, IV. 484). He established a Vishṇu shrine in his city called Jayapura. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* poetically says that Keśava in his quadruple form and reclining on Śesha took up his abode in the city of Jayapura abandoning his residence in Vishṇu's world (*Ibid.*, IV. 508). Again the king's mother, Amritaprabhā built the Amritakeśava temple in memory of her dead son (*Ibid.*, IV. 659). During the reign of Ajitāpīḍa his ministers, Utpala, Padma, Dharma, Kalyāṇa and Mamma constructed Vishṇu temples associated with their names (*Ibid.*, IV. 695-698).

The Kārkoṭas were succeeded by the kings of the Utapala dynasty. Vaishṇavism made much headway during their rule. The first king of this dynasty was Avantīvarman (855/6-883) who built the Vishṇu temple called Avantīsvāmin before his accession to the throne (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, V. 45). This would show that in reality Avantīvarman was a devout worshipper of Vishṇu, though outwardly he appeared as a Śaiva. His life-long devotion to Vaishṇavism is also evident from the fact that he had the *Bhagavadgītā* read from the beginning to end in the hour of his death. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (*Ibid.*, V., 123-125) states: "Having there become certain of his [near] death, he (Avantīvarman) disclosed to Śūra (Avantīvarman's step-brother) at the end of his life and with folded hands, his attachment to the worship of Vishṇu which he had long hidden. Listening to the end to the (recital of the) *Bhagavadgītā*, he cast off his (earthly) life with a cheerful mind." Śūravarman founded the Vishṇu called Śūravarmasvāmī and a Gokula (*Ibid.*, V. 23). His another brother founded the temple called Samaravarmasvāmin after his own name to house an image of Keśava (*Ibid.*, V. 25). The king's officers and ministers also encouraged Vaishṇavism. Mahodaya who was the chief door-keeper of Śūra built the Vishṇu temple called Mahodayasvāmin (*Ibid.*, V. 28-29). Avantīvarman's minister was Prabhākara who evidenced his interest in Vaishṇavism by erecting the Vishṇu temple called Prabhākarasvāmin (*Ibid.*, V. 30).

There is a reference to the Vishṇu temple called Vainyasvāmin at Trigrami at the confluence of the river Sindhu and Vitastā (*Ibid.*, V. 97 and 99).

The illustrious Suyya, Avantīvarman's gifted engineer, seems to have been a follower of Vaishṇavism. After draining the waters of the Vitastā by clearing its bed near Barmula of rocks and thereby reclaiming large tracts of land in the valley, he founded the town of Suyyapura (modern Sopore) and built several Vishṇu temples, notably the one named Hrishīkeśa Yogaśāyin at the new confluence of the Vitastā and Sindhu (*Ibid.*, V. 100). He also prohibited fishing and hunting in Wulur lake.

Dayaram Sahni in the course of his excavation at the Avantisvāmī temple found several images of four-headed and four armed Vishṇu. One of such images which now stands on the verandah of the Gadādhara temple at Śrīnagar is a fine example of art (Debala Mitra, *Pandrethan, Avantīpur* and *Martand*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1977, pl. XII). As usual with this type the central human face represents Vāsudeva, the right face which is that of a lion represents Saṅkarshaṇa, the left face which is that of a boar stands for Aniruddha and the fierce face with *Jaṭābhāra* at the rear signifies Pradyumna. The upper right and left hands carry respectively the stalk of the full-blown lotus and a conch-shell while the corresponding lower hands are placed

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Rādhā being led to Krishna, Basohli, 1730, National Museum, New Delhi.

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on the head of Gadā-devī and Chakrapurusha, both of them carrying a *chāmara* in their right hand. The earth goddess is shown between the legs. Most of the Vishṇu images representing the type are now preserved in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum at Śrīnagar. The popularity of Vaishṇavism is also attested by the discovery of the images representing different avatāras also found in other parts of the valley, particularly at Verinag, Martand, Baramula, etc. Some of these are preserved in the Śrīnagar Museum and several other museums.

The *Nīlamata* mentions various incarnations of Vishṇu, such as Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Hamsa, Aśvaśīras, Rāma-Dāśarathi, Madhusūdana, Nrisimha, Trivikrama and Buddha, but omits Kalkī and Paraśurāma. It appears that till the time of the *Nīlamata Purāṇa*, the list of the Avatāras was not systematised. Kshemendra's *Daśāvatāracharita* (11th century) offers a systematised list, including the names of Paraśurāma and Kalkī (Ved Kumari, *op. cit.*, pp. 154 and 155).

Though the *Nīlamata* does not mention Paraśurāma avatāra, it mentions the exploits of Paraśurāma exterminating the Kshatriyas twenty-one times. It further states that Paraśurāma erected an image of Keśava near the river Madhumatī and the people worshipped it with animal sacrifices. He set up an image of the god also on the mountain Gridhrakūṭa. In the *Nīlamata Purāṇa*, Paraśurāma is shown as a devotee of Vishṇu and not his incarnation (Ved Kumari, *op. cit.*, pp. 154 and 155).

The *Nīlamata* also refers to the cults of the Bhāgavatas and the Pāñcharātras, the former worshipping Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇa as their chief deity and the latter worshipping the four *Vyūhas*, namely, Vāsudeva, Saṅkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha (*Ibid.*, p. 156).

The *Nīlamata Purāṇa* refers to Krishṇa's exploits including the destruction of the demon Jalodbhava. It states that Madhusūdana should be bathed when there is Uttarāyaṇa. While it refers to the worship of various gods and goddesses it prescribes also the worship of Devakī and Yaśodā (*Ibid.*, vv 616 and 617).

Amongst the Tīrthas mentioned are included Vishṇupāda which is the sacred lake in the Valley considered as the incarnation of the body of Satī, and the well-known Chakratīrtha.

Vaishṇavism continued in popularity during the subsequent periods, i.e. the tenth-twelfth century, though there were Civil Wars and chaos from time to time. Queen Sugandhā (904-906) built the town of Gopālapura and the temple of Gopālakeśava (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, V. 244).

Her daughter-in-law, Nandā (the wife of Gopālavarman) erected the temple of Nandā-Keśava (*Ibid.*, V. 245). Meruvardhanasvāmī, the Minister of Pārtha (906-921) built the shrine of Vishṇu called Meruvardhanasvāmī (*Ibid.*, V. 267-268). The temple of Vishṇu Yaśaskarasvāmin which was started by the king Yaśaskara was completed by Parvagupta (*Ibid.*, VI. 140 and 141). A Vishṇu temple called Phālgunasvāmī was erected by Bhaṭṭa Phālguna who was a courtier of Kshegmaupta (950-958) (*Ibid.*, VI, 169). The lofty Bhīmakeśava temple was erected by the illustrious Bhīmasāhi (*Ibid.*, VI.178) who was the maternal grandfather of the Queen Diddā of the tenth century). The queen herself built the Vishṇu temples called Abhimanyusvāmīn and Simhasvāmin, and two more temples called Diddāsvāmin (S. C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1970, p. 178, and *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, VI. 299, 304 and 300-304).

Kshitīrāja, who was an uncle of King Kalasa (11th century) seems to have been a devout follower of Vaishṇavism. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (VII. 258) states that 'after enjoying the blessings of quietism for many years as a most devout Vaishṇava.... attained absorption in Vishṇu at Chakradharapur."

The popularity of Vaishṇavism in Kashmir during the eleventh century is attested by the *Daśāvatāracharita* of Kshemendra, composed in 1066. It provides an account of the ten incarnations of Vishṇu, including Krishṇa as one of them, namely Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nrisimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Krishṇa, Buddha and Karkya (S.K. De and S. N. Dasgupta, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Vol. I, University of Calcutta, 1947, pp. 324 and 325).

King Harsha (1089-1101) was an iconoclast and he destroyed many Vishṇu temples. He desecrated also the famous Parihāsakeśava image. Uchchala (1101-11) restored most of them. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (VIII. 78-80) states, "This pious (king) with whom the restoration of decayed (buildings) was a passion, put in order the famous sites of Chakradhara, Yogeśa, and Svayambhū. The illustrious (image of Vishṇu), Parihāsakeśava which the king Harsha had carried off was put afresh by the king at Parihāsapura. The king, who knew no greed, adorned the (shrine of Vishṇu) Tribhuvanasvāmī with the previously described parrot house (Śukāvalī) which Harsha had carried off." This shows the king's intense devotion to Vaishṇavism (Rājataraṅgiṇī, VIII. 71-80).

Subsequently, Ratnādevī, the queen of Jayasimha (1128-49), bestowed her patronage

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on Vaishṇavism. She built the Vaikuṇṭhamaṭha and several other pious buildings (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, VIII. 2433). The Gokula erected by her excelled those previously established. That Gokula provided meadows for free grazing of the cows and had abundant supply of water from the Vitasta. The image of Govardhana displayed there was a perfection of beauty (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, VIII. 2436-2438). Again Alamkāra, Superintendent of Jayasimha's treasury was also a great follower of Vaishṇavism. He presented cows at the festival of Vishṇu Ādivarāha (*Ibid.*, VIII. 2425). Among other Hindu kings, Rāmadeva restored the Vishṇu temple at Utpalapura and Udayanadeva gifted all golden ornaments in his treasury to Vishṇu (S. C. Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 179).

Even after the advent of Islam in the Kashmir Valley Vaishṇavism side by side with Saivism cotinued to flourish. This is evident mostly from the literary sources. The sayings of Lalla Yogīśavarī, the great Śaiva Yoginī (fourteenth century), refer to Nārāyaṇa in a manner indicating a sizeable number of followers of the Vaishṇava cult in Kashmir during the period in question.

The verses 107 and 109 (Grierson and Barnett's "Lalla Vakyani," *Journal, Royal Asiatic Society*, London, 1920) refer to Nārāyaṇa in a telling manner. "Man! Why dost thou twist a rope of sand? With such a line, O Burden-bearer, the ship will not progress for thee. That which Nārāyaṇa wrote for thee in the line of Fate, That Good Sir! none can reverse for thee." "Searching and seeking came I from my inner soul into moonlight. Searching and seeking came I to know that like is joined to like. This all is only Thou, O Nārāyaṇa, only Thou, only Thou. What are these Thy sports?"

Kashmir remained an important centre of Sanskrit learning ever through. To the followers of the Bhakti cult here, as elsewhere, the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Bhāgavta Purāṇa*, the *Daśāvatāracharita*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* were objects of special study and many manuscripts of these texts, some of them, profusely illustrated, were produced in Kashmir, and they are preserved in various libraries in India and abroad. The Kashmir version of the *Mahābhārata*, discovered by Professor Bühler in 1885 was exhaustively made use of by Dr. Sukthankar in the preparation of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. The Kashmir manuscript of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, now in the collection of the Göttingen Museum Library is considered to be one of the earliest and most authoritative texts.

Many Kashmiri Paṇḍits, such as Keśava, Vasugupta, Ānandavardhana, Rāmakaṇṭha, Bhāskara, Abhinavagupta and many others wrote commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā*. The Kashmiri Paṇḍits acquired proficiency also in Persian. Paṇḍit Gopal Kaul (middle of the eighteenth century) translated the *Daśamaskandha* of the *Bhāgavta Purāṇa* into verse in Persian (Manuscript in Anand Kaul Collection).

The popularity of Vaishṇavism can also be gauged from many compositions in the Kashmiri language. The earliest Kashmiri texts such as *Mahānayaprakāśa* and *Bāṇāsuravadha*, *Lalla Vākyāni*, *Sayings of* Nund Rishi, etc. (fifteenth century) contain frequent references to Nārāyaṇa, Krishṇa and various avatāras of Krishṇa. As the language became more mature there came into existence a very profuse literature on Krishṇa lore and Bhakti. Paṇḍit Prakash Ram of Kurigam has left us the translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* into Kashmiri verse. Paṇḍit Paramānanda of Mattan surpasses all his known predecessors in the technique of metre and rhyme. His forte, however, is the description of Krishṇa-Līlā into which he has thrown all his heart and soul and intellect. His *Rādhāsvayaṁvara* and *Sudāmācharitra* have made him immortal. He was followed by his disciple, Paṇḍit Lakshmaṇa and by Paṇḍit Krishṇadās of Vanpoh village. The latter has written profusely on various episodes from the *Bhāgavata*. All these poems and bhajans in the local dialect made Krishṇa cult the most popular religious faith among the Hindus of Kashmir. *Śrī Krishṇāvaṭāralīlā* in Kashmiri by Dīnanātha is a favourite work with the Hindus of Kashmir. This work on the life of Krishṇa, is based, like the *Premasāgara*, on the tenth *Skandha* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Dīnanātha seems to have flourished towards the end of the eighteenth century (Sir George Grierson, Asiatic Society edition, Calcutta, 1928).

Some of the masterpieces of the Kashmiri artists depict Krishṇa and Vaishṇava lore from all aspects. We have paintings going back to the early eighteenth century of Krishṇa, the Gopīs, the Rāsa Līlā and Vishṇu and his avatāras. Most of these were produced to be installed in temples and Pūjā rooms of householders and also to illustrate manuscripts. Kashmiri miniatures are housed in different museums in India.

Hence from the eighteenth century onwards we find the foundation of numerous temples dedicated to Vishṇu, Rādhā-Krishṇa, Rāma and the Avatāras of Vishṇu. Notable among these are the Gadādhara temple near the Secretariat, the Rādhā-Krishṇa temples at Hari Parvat, Maharājganj, Safa Kadal and Fateh Kadal in Śrīnagar.

Vaishṇavism was equally popular in Jammu, though very few ancient monuments

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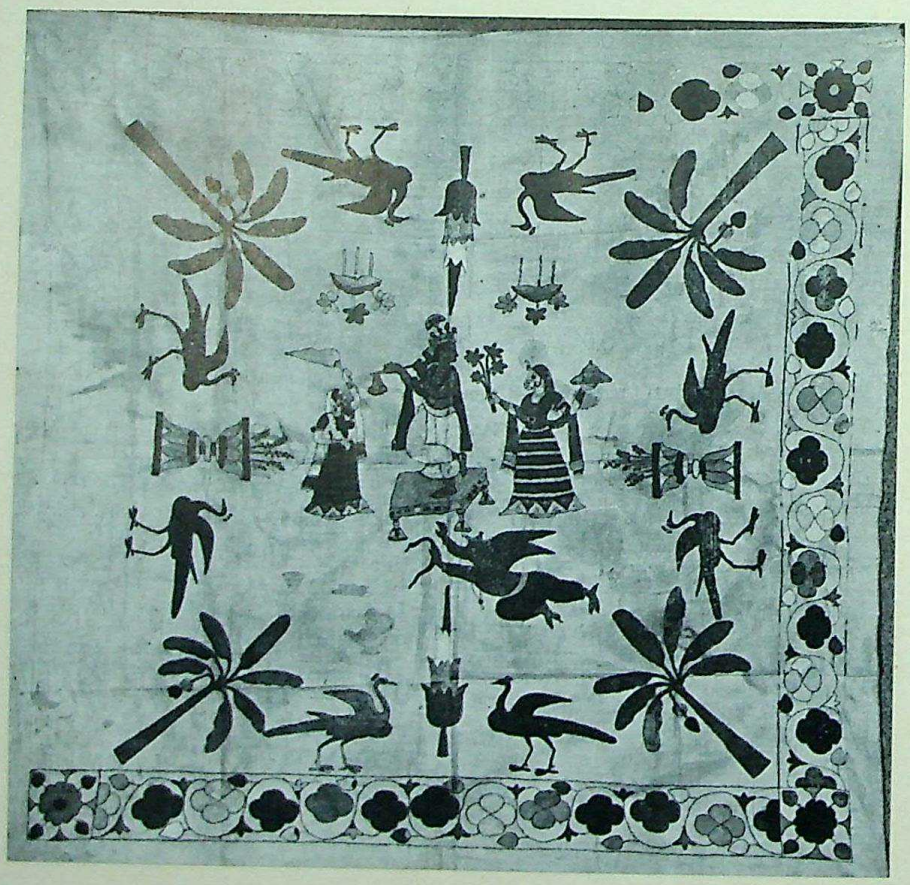
and images pertaining to the subject have survived in the area. The Papanashini spring has a number of decorated slabs, two of which show the Matsyāvatāra and Vishṇu reclining on Śesha. Some of the representations at the Bauli wall at Sukral, Billawar and Manwal include Narasimha, Hanumān and Vishṇu. There are remains of ancient Vishṇu temples at Kirmchi about six miles from Udhampur. Some of the sculptures discovered here include among others Vishṇu (c. eleventh century).

A number of Vishṇu shrines were made in Jammu during the eighteenth-nineteenth century. Mention may be made of the Raghunātha, Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Rādhā-Krishṇa, Gadādhara, Narasimha and Hanumān temples.

Vishṇu in his Rāma incarnation was the family deity of the Dogra rulers. The Raghunātha at Jammu is a very big temple complex (J. N. Ganhar, *Jammu Shrines and Pilgrimages*, Ganhar Publications, New Delhi, pp. 35 ff). The shrine of Vaishṇo Devī 39 miles from Jammu city is one of the most popular pilgrimages in India. The shrine is a natural cave enshrining the images of Mahāsarasvatī, Mahākālī, and Mahālakshmī. The religious impulse and emotion of the people found its best expression in the paintings of various schools which flourished in Jammu and of which the Basohli school is the most well known. A favourite theme of the Basohli paintings is the scenes from Krishṇa's life from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the love of Rādhā and Krishṇa portrayed in the *Gīta-Govinda*.



The Rāsalīlā, Chamba Rumal, 19th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Monochrome Plates

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Figs. 1-2. Balarāma and Krishṇa-Vāsudeva depicted on the coin of Agathocles, silver, 2nd century B. C., Ai'Khanoum, Afghanistan (after reproduction of the coin in question on p. 123, Arts Asiatique, Tome XXVI, 1973).

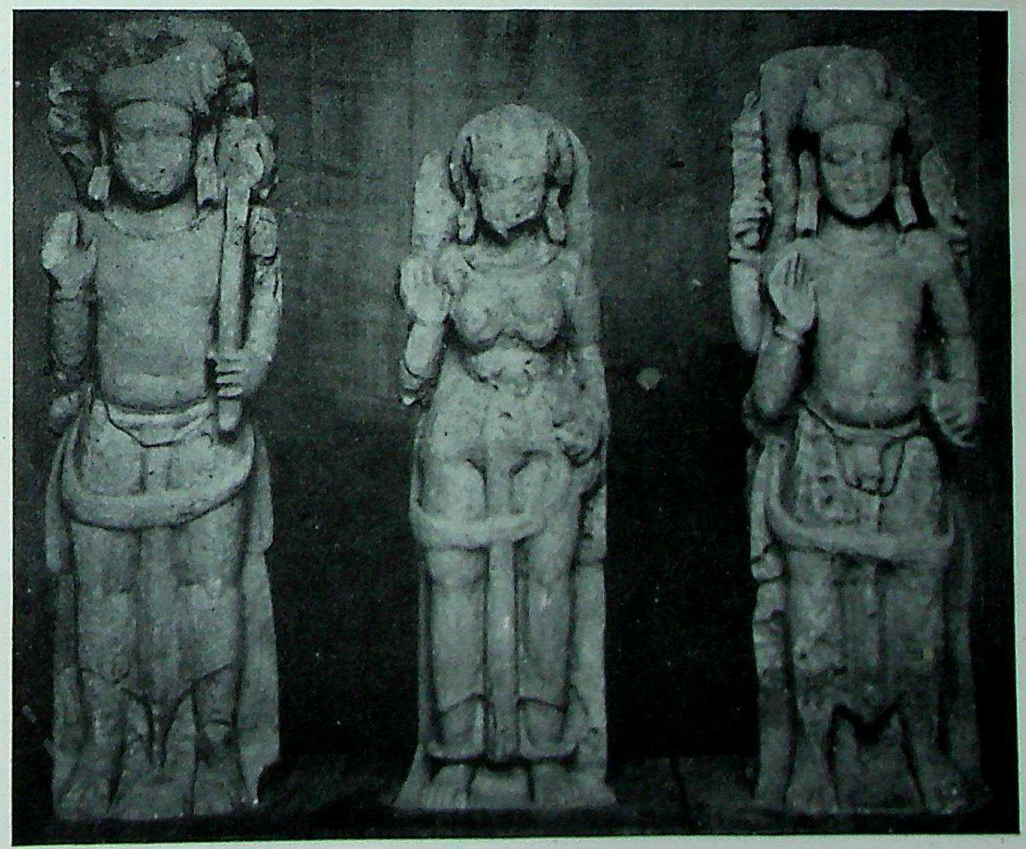

Fig. 3. Ekānaṁśā Group (Krishṇa, Subhadrā and Balarāma), stone, Kushana, c. 2nd century, Gaya, Bihar, Patna Museum, Patna.

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Fig. 4. Balarāma, stone, Śuṅga, 2nd century B. C., Mathura, State Museum, Lucknow.

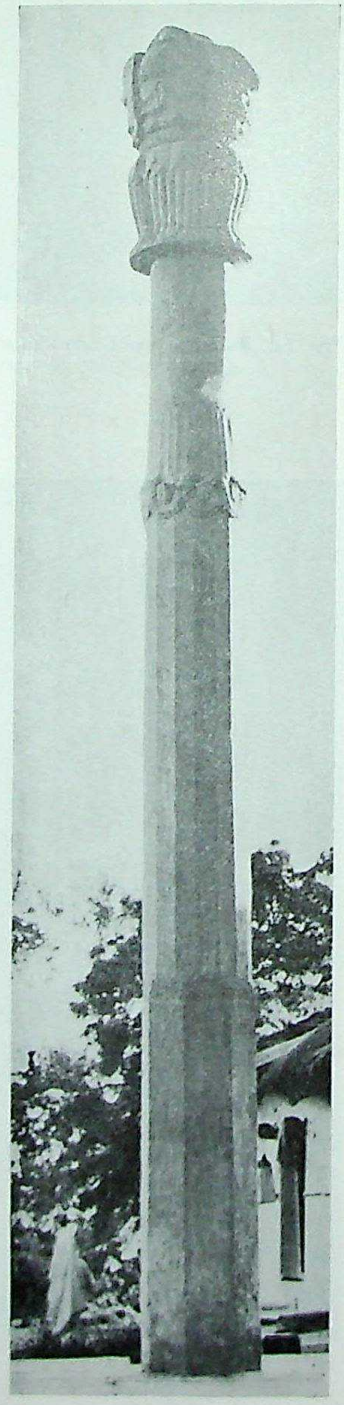

Fig. 5. Inscribed Garuḍa column, erected in Besnagar (Vidiśā) by the Greek Ambassador, Heliodoros, 2nd century B.C.

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Fig. 6. Bhāgavata inscription from Ghosundi (Rajasthan), mentioning the names of Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva, 2nd century B. C.

Fig. 7. Balarāma, stone, Paharpur Temple, Bangladesh, c. 8th century.

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Fig. 8. Mārkaṇḍeya worshipping Krishṇa as Vaṭapatraśāyī, Kangra Style, 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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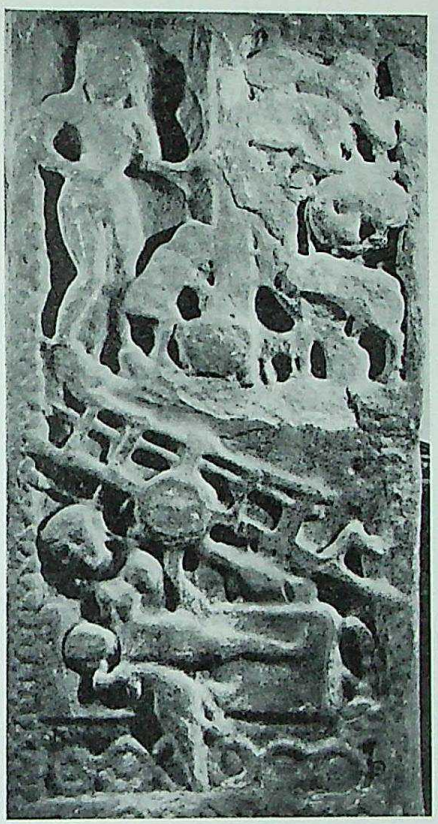

Fig. 9. Scenes from Krishna's life, from bottom to top: Śakaṭa-bhaṅga (the upturning of the cart) and dadhi-manthana (the churning of curd), Mandor pillar, Rajasthan, stone, Gupta, 4th-5th century, Sardar Museum, Jodhpur.

Fig. 10. Scenes from Krishna's life, from top to bottom: Dhenu-kāsura-vadha (the killing of the Demon Dhenuka) (?), the killing of the Bull-demon, Arishṭa, and the killing of the Horse-demon, Keśī, Mandor pillar, Rajasthan, stone, Gupta, 4th-5th century, Sardar Museum, Jodhpur.

Fig. 11. Scenes from Krishna's life, from right to left: Yamalārjuna-episode (the uprooting of the twin Arjuna trees), Pūtanā-vadha (killing of Demoness Pūtanā), Dadhi-manthana (the churning of curd) and the change of the babes, Gateway of Northern Fort, Bādāmi, c. 600.

Fig. 12. Scenes from Krishna's life, from right to left: the uplifting of Mount Govardhana, the killing of the Elephant Kuvalayāpiḍa, and of Demon Pralamba, near Fort Gate, Bādāmi, c. 600.

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Fig. 13. Scenes from Krishṇa's life, from right to left: the killing of the Bull-demon, Arishṭa, Kāliyamardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), and Keśī-vadha (the killing of the Horse-demon, Keśī), near Fort Gate, Bādāmi, c. 600.

Fig. 14. Upper register, from left to right: Dadhi-manthana (the churning of curd), Śakaṭa-bhaṅga (the upturning of the cart), Bakāsura-vadha (the killing of the Crane-demon), the Yamalārjuna-episode (the uprooting of the twin Arjuna trees); lower register: Arishṭa-vadha (the killing of the Bull-demon, Arishṭa), Vatsāsura-vadha (the killing of Vatsāsura), and Pūtanā-vadha (the killing of Demoness Pūtanā), Viśvanātha Temple, Paṭṭaḍakal, c. 600.

Fig. 15. Scenes from Krishṇa's life, from right to left: Arishṭa-vadha (the killing of the Bull-demon, Arishṭa), Keśī-vadha (the killing of the Horse-demon, Keśī), Kuvalayāpīḍa-vadha (the killing of the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa), and Dhenuka-vadha (the killing of the Demon Dhenuka by Balarāma), pillar-detail, Mallikārjuna Temple, Paṭṭaḍakal, c. 600.

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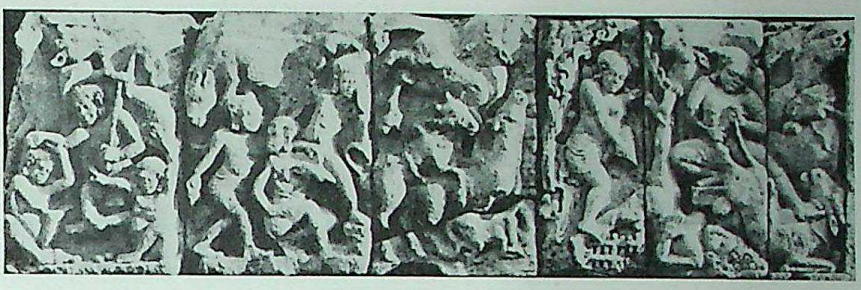

Fig. 16. Scenes from Krishṇa's life, from right: Arishṭa-vadha (the killing of the Bull-demon, Arishṭa), Pralamba-vadha (the killing of Pralamba) and Vatsāsura-vadha (the killing of Vatsāsura), Vishṇu Temple, Prambanam, Indonesia, c. 9th century.

Fig. 17. Scenes from Krishṇa's life, with the Giri-Govardhana (the raising of Mount Govardhana) depicted in the centre, Hoysaleśvara Temple, Halebid, c. 1150.

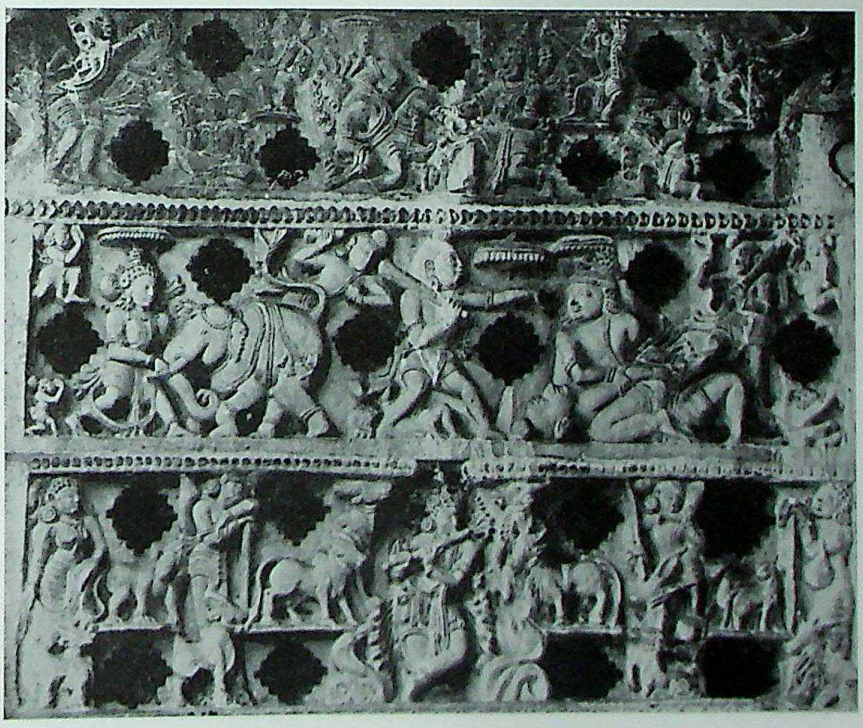

Fig. 18. Scenes from Krishṇa's life, lower register: Krishna playing on his flute; middle register: the killing of the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, and fight with the Mallas, upper register: the killing of Kaṁsa, Chenna Keśava Temple, Belur, Karṇāṭaka, c. 1200.

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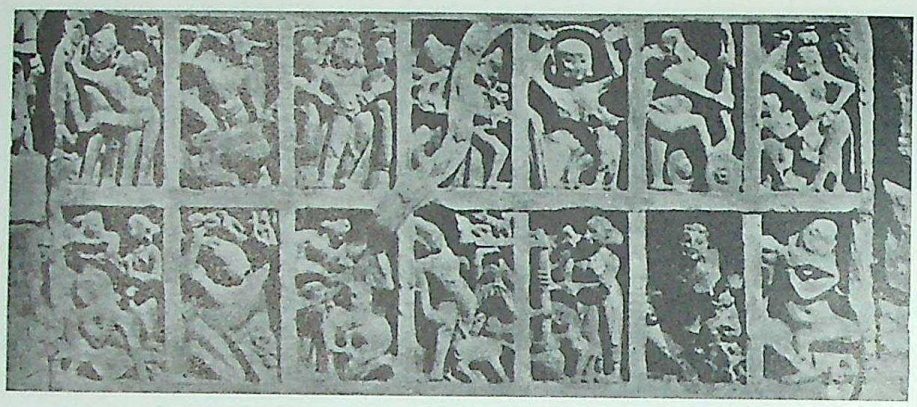

Fig. 19. Scenes from Krishṇa's life: upper register, from left to right: Arishṭāsura-vadha (the killing of the Bull-demon, Arishṭa), Yamalārjuna-episode (the uprooting of the twin Arjuna trees), Vasudeva carrying the newly-born Krishṇa across the Yamunā, Pūtanā-Vadha (the killing of Demoness Pūtanā); lower register: Giri-Govardhana (the raising of Mount Govardhana), Dadhi-manthana (the churning of curd), Pūtanā-vadha (the killing of Demoness Pūtanā), from Thakur's Palace, Shohagpura, 12th century (after pl. XLII, Haihayas of Tripuri and their Monuments by R. D. Banerji).

Fig. 20. Scenes from Krishna's life: the fight with the Mallas and the killing of Kaṁsa, painting, West Bengal, c. 19th century, State Archaeological Galleries, Calcutta, West Bengal.

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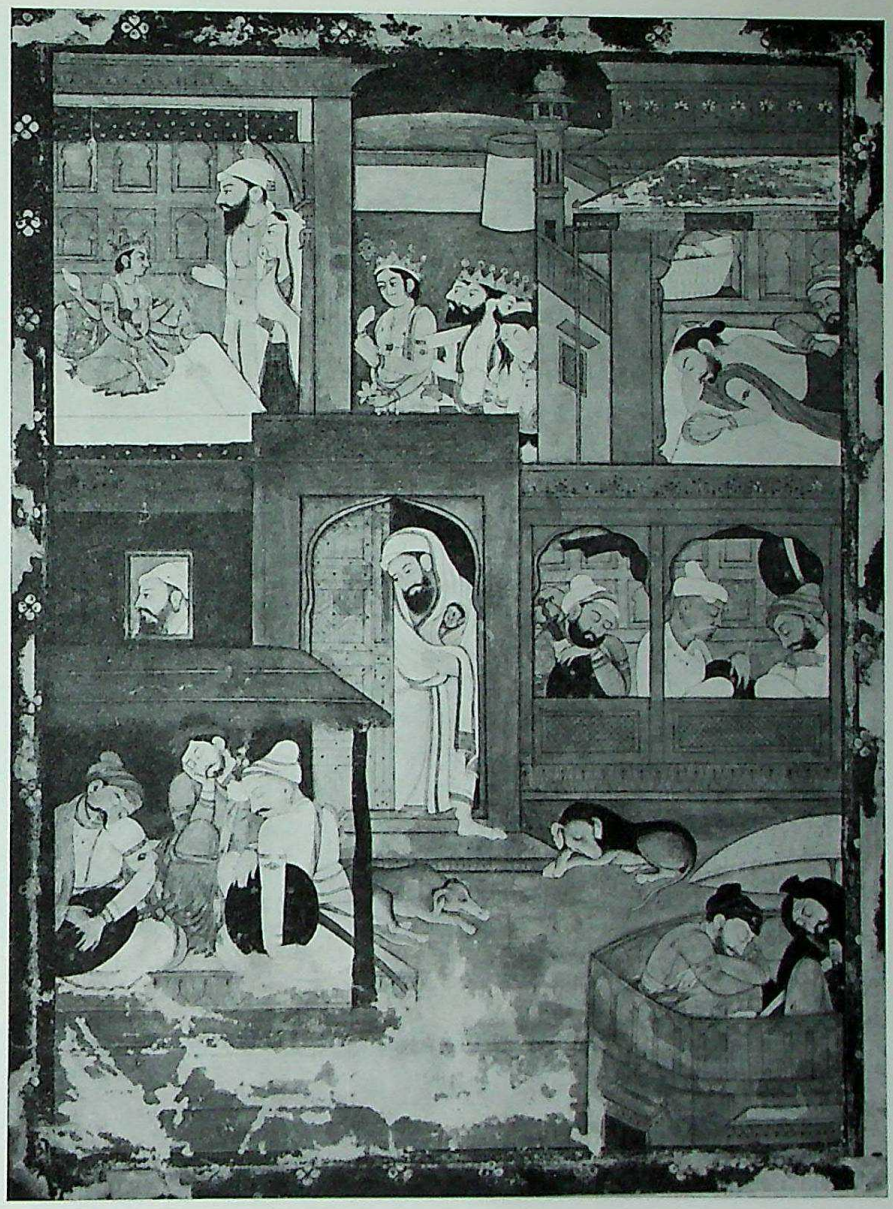

Fig. 21. The birth of Krishṇa and revelation of his divinity to his parents, Kangra Style, c. 1800, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

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Fig. 22. Vasudeva carries the newly-born Krishṇa across the Yamunā to Gokula, Kushana, stone, 2nd century, Mathura, Government Museum, Mathura.

Fig. 23. Vasudeva carries the newly-born Krishṇa to Gokula, stone, Gupta, 5th century, Deogarh, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 24. Vasudeva carries the newly-born Krishṇa to Gokula, stone, Paharpur Temple, Bangladesh, c. 8th century.

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Fig. 25. Vasudeva carries the newly-born Krishṇa across the Yamunā to Gokula, terracotta, Krishṇa Chandra Temple, Kalna, West Bengal, 1764.

Fig. 27. Vasudeva carries the newly-born Krishṇa across the Yamunā to Gokula, illustration to the Bhāgavata, Daśamaskandha, c. 18th century, Assam.

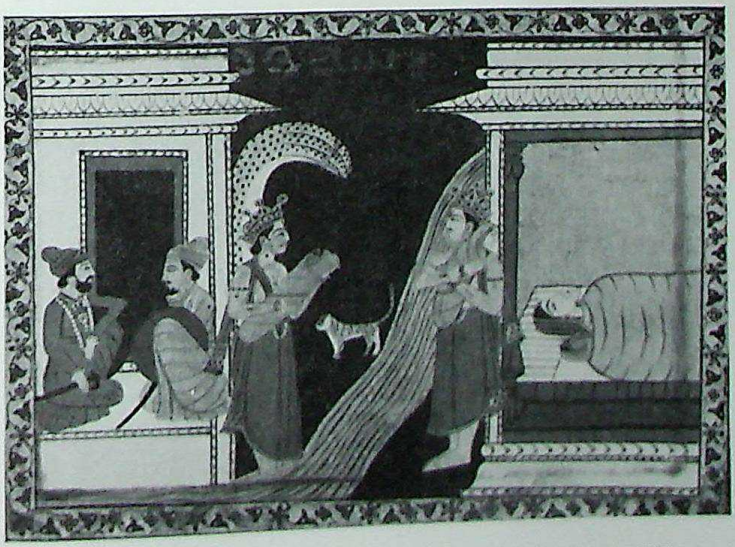

Fig. 26. Vasudeva carries the newly-born Krishṇa to Gokula, Kulu, c. 1794, Punjab Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

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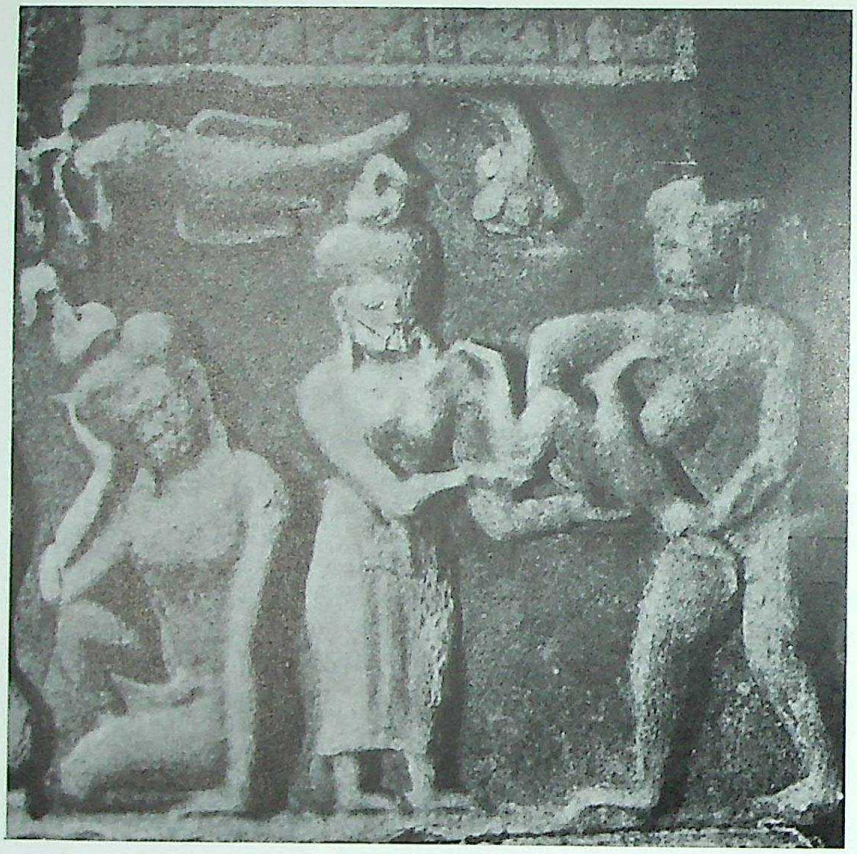

Fig. 28. The change of babes, stone, c. 11th century, Angkor Wat, (after fig. 76, Angkor: Sculptures Khmères by M. Giteau).

Fig. 29. The change of babes, Guler Style, c. 1760, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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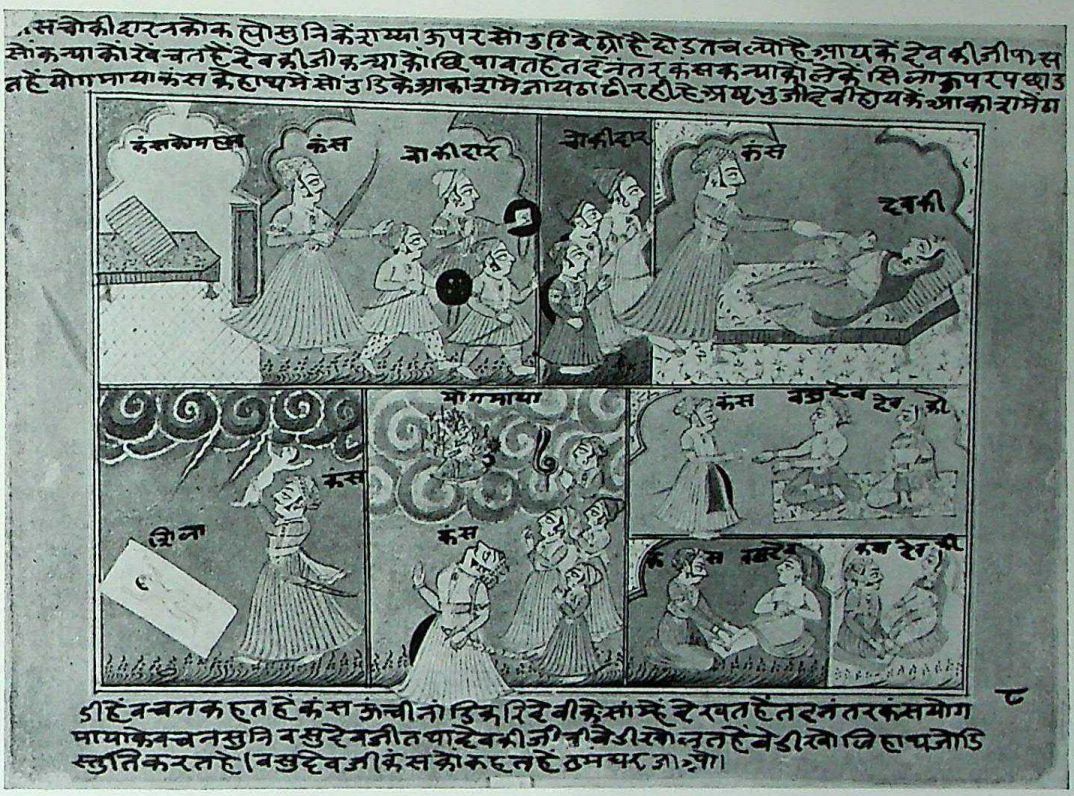

Fig. 30. Kaṁsa hurls Yogamāyā, Mewar, c. 1800, Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda.

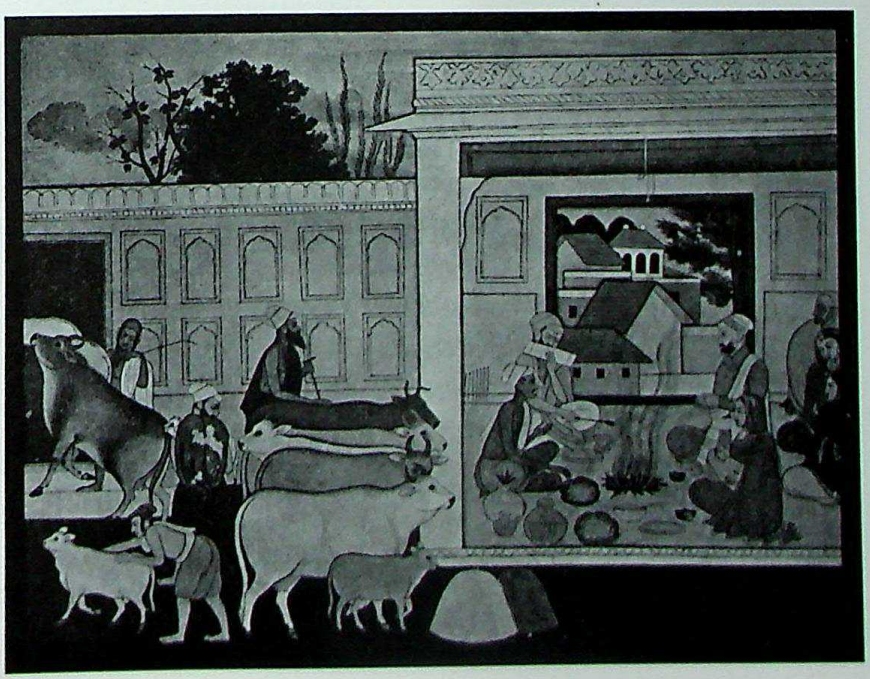

Fig. 31. The Brâhmaṇas celebrate Krishṇa's birth-rites (Jâtakarma), Bhâgavata Purâṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 32. Pūtanā-vadha (Demoness Pūtanā killed), stone, panel No. 8, on the north face. Lakshmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, 953-954.

Fig. 33. Pūtanā-vadha (Demoness Pūtanā killed), Mewar, 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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Fig. 34. Pūtanā-vadha (Demoness Pūtanā killed), terracotta, Krishṇa Chandra Temple, Kalna, West Bengal, 1764.

Fig. 35. Pūtanā-vadha (Demoness Pūtanā killed), wood-carving from a temple car, Tamil Nadu, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 36. Śakaṭa-bhaṅga (the upturning of the cart), stone, Gupta, 5th century, Deogarh, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 37. Śakaṭa-bhaṅga, (the upturning of the cart), stone, panel No. 10, on the west face, Lakshmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, 953-954.

Fig. 38. Śakaṭa-bhaṅga (the upturning of the cart), Mewar, 18th century, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, U.S.A.

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Fig. 39. Śakaṭa-bhaṅga (the upturning of the cart), wood-carving from a temple car, Tamil Nadu, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 40. Triṇāvarta-vadha (Demon Triṇāvarta killed), Guler Style, 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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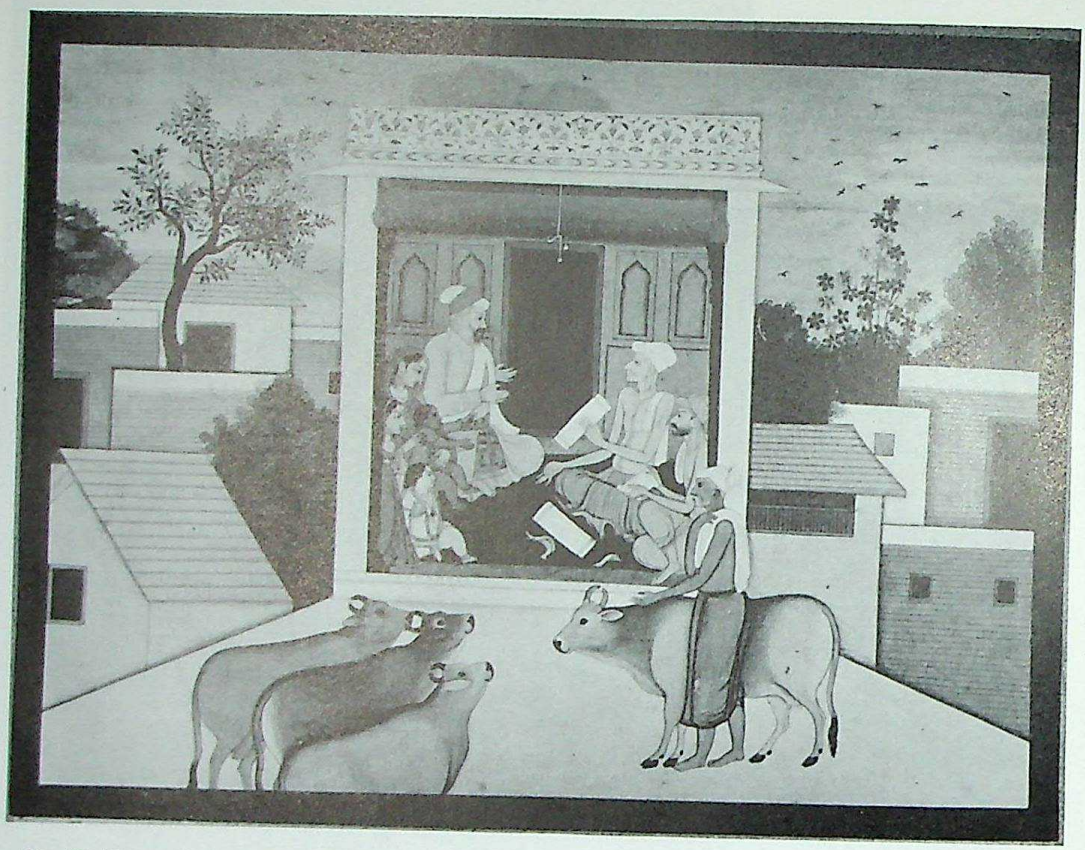

Fig. 41. The naming ceremony of Balarāma and Krishṇa (nāmakaraṇa), Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 42. Krishṇa and Balarāma as children, Rajasthan, probably Mewar, c. 1550. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, U.S.A.

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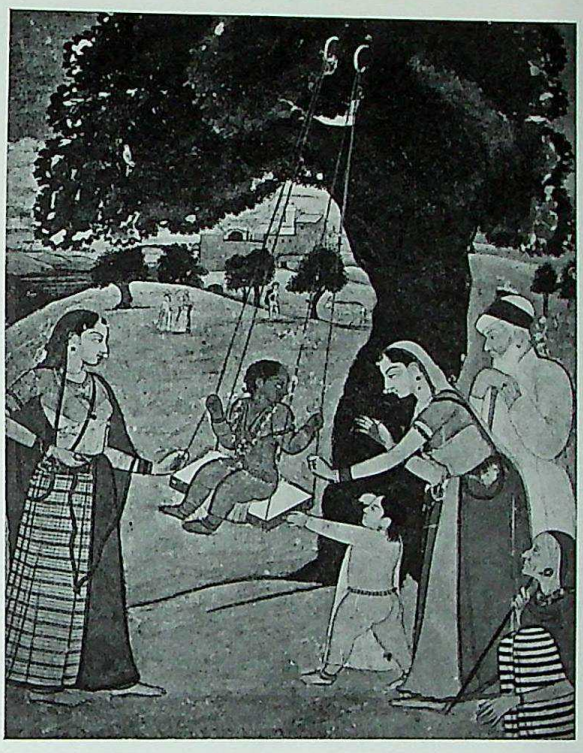

Fig. 43. Krishṇa on the swing, Guler Style, c. 1750-1760, British Museum, London.

Fig. 44. Bālakrishṇa, bronze, 14th-15th century, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

Fig. 45. Krishṇa and Yaśodā, painting, Elangannuppazha, Ernakulam, Kerala, c. 1800.

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Fig. 46. Child Krishṇa crying for the moon, Kangra Style, c. 1780, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

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Fig. 47. Dadhi-manthana (the churning of curd), stone, Gupta, 5th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

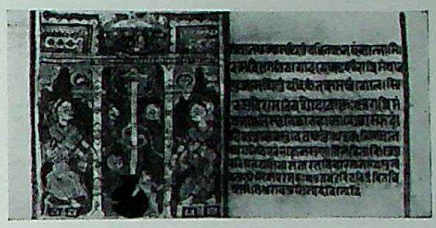

Fig. 49. Dadhi-manthana (the churning of curd), Mewar, 16th century, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 48. Dadhi-manthana (the churning of curd), stone, Lingaraja temple, Bhubaneswar, 11th century.

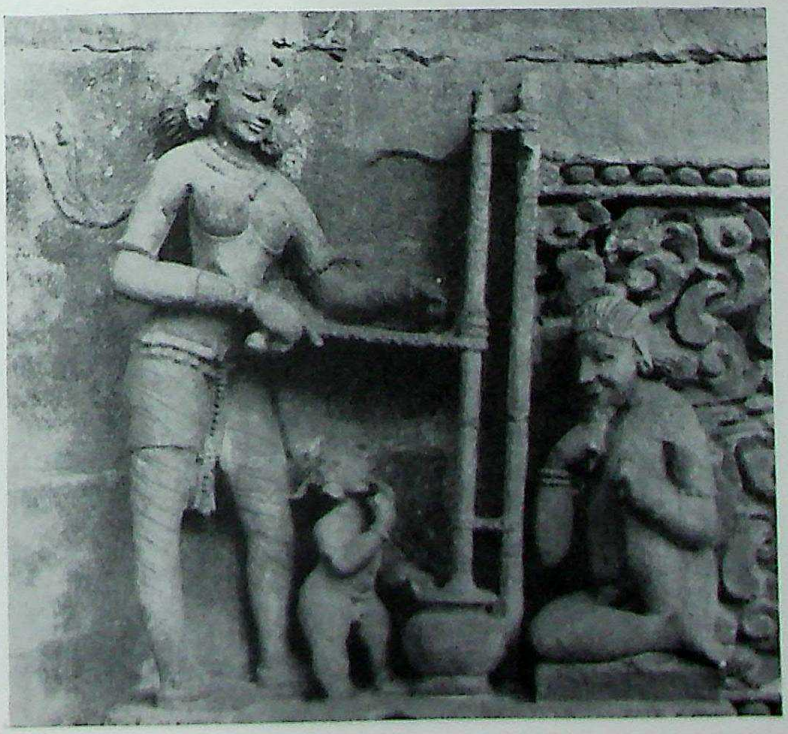

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Fig. 50. Bālakrishṇa, standing, stone, Narayanakannur, Vishṇu Temple, Ramanatali, Cannanore District, Kerala, 12th-13th century.

Fig. 52. Krishṇa seated with a ball of butter in right hand and a horn in left hand, bronze, 16th century, Haridas Swali Collection, Bombay.

Fig. 51. Bālakrishṇa, stone, Keśavasvāmi Temple, Harahadgalli, Bellary District, Karṇāṭaka, late 14th century.

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Fig. 53. Bālakrishṇa depicted on a gold coin of Śrī Pratāpa Krishṇa Rāya, 1509-1531, Vijayanagar, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 54. Bālakrishṇa, stone, Hampi (the image was first installed at Udayagiri, captured by Krishṇadeva Rāya, and installed at Hampi, in 1515), Government Museum, Madras.

Fig. 55. Bālakrishṇa, Tanjore painting, 19th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 56. Krishṇa stealing butter, early Rajasthani Style, 16th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

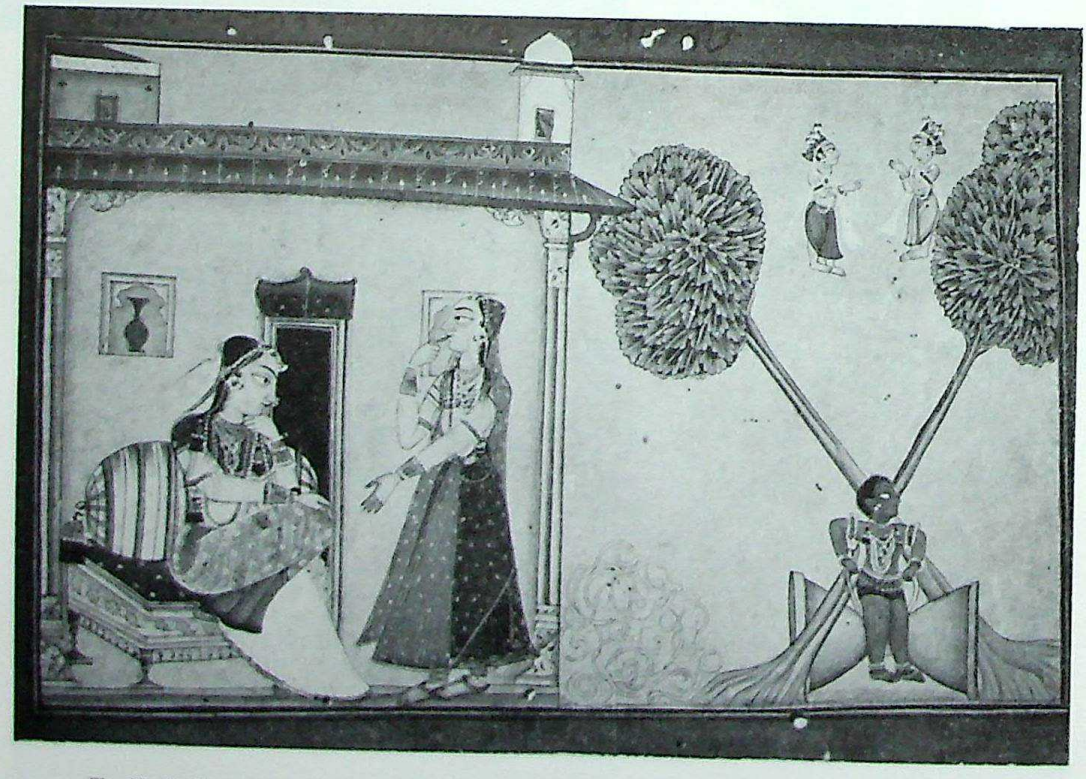

Fig. 57. Krishṇa uproots Yamalārjuna, Basohli, c. 1725, Pahari region, Punjab Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

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Fig. 58. Krishṇa uproots Yamalārjuna, stone, Paharpur Temple, Bangladesh, c. 8th century.

Fig. 59. Krishṇa uproots Yamalārjuna, stone, panel No. 4, on the north face, Lakshmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, 953-54.

Fig. 60. Veṇugopāla, painting, Tali, Khozhikode District, Kerala, c. 1800.

Fig. 61. Veṇugopāla, folk-style, Western India, c. 19th century, Haridas Swali Collection, Bombay.

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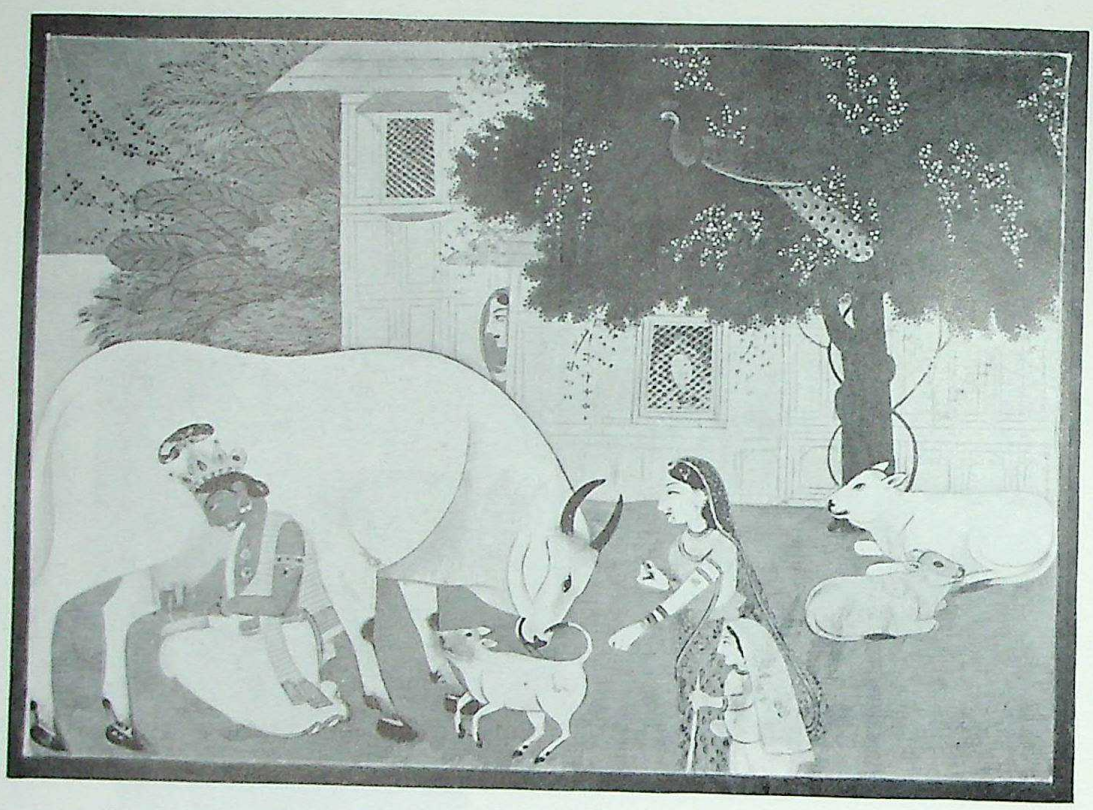

Fig. 62. Krishṇa milking the cow, Kangra Style, 1800, Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda.

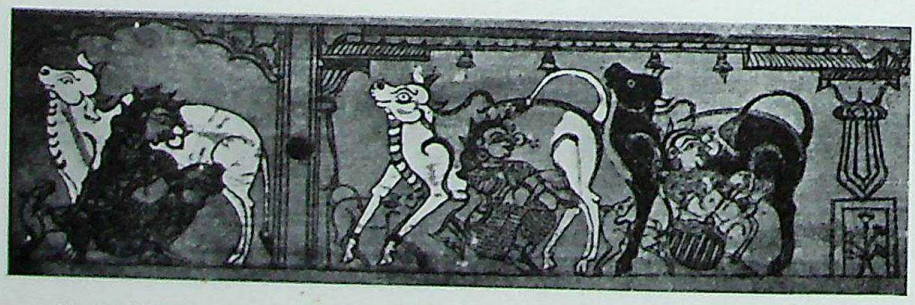

Fig. 63. Milking the cows, palm-leaf illustration to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Orissa, 17th century, British Museum, London.

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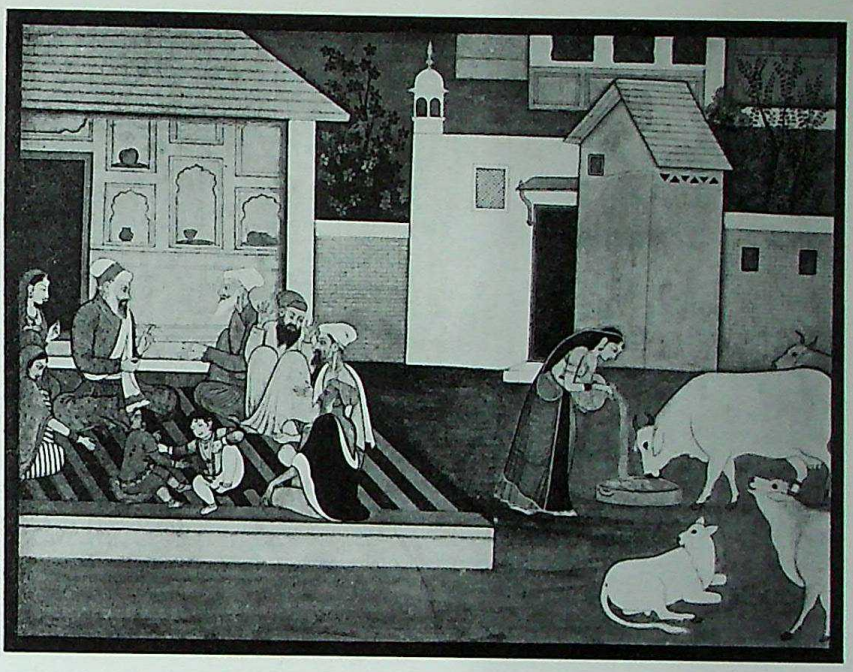

Fig. 64. Nanda holding discussion with the elders on the advisability of migrating from Gokula to Vrindavana, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 65. Migration from Gokula to Vrindavana, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 66. Krishṇa kills Vatsāsura, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

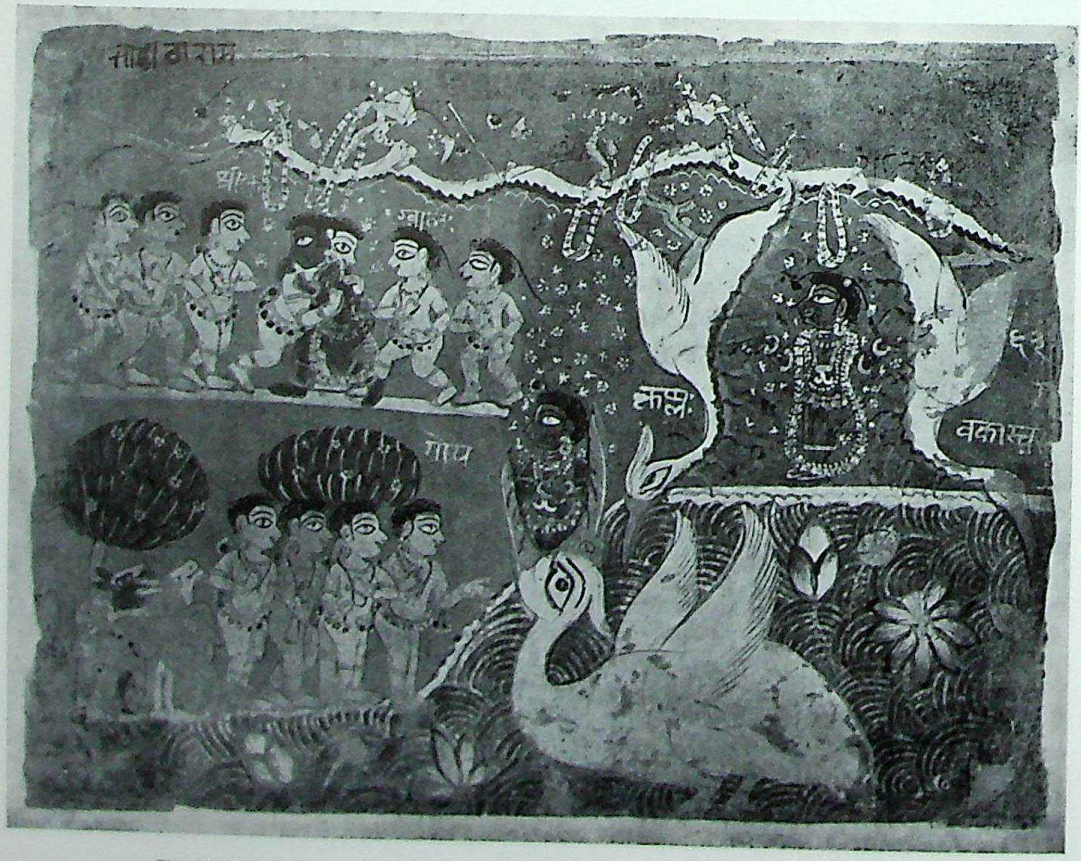

Fig. 67. Krishṇa kills Bakāsura, Mewar, 16th century, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, U.S.A.

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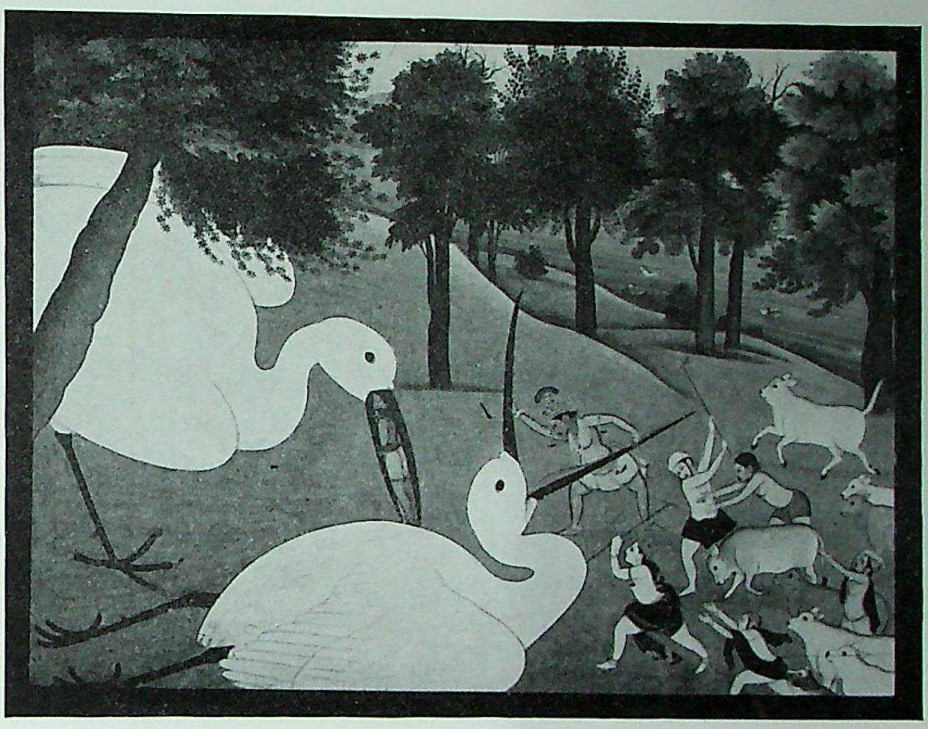

Fig. 68. Krishṇa kills Bakāsura, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 69. Krishna kills Bakāsura, wood-carving from a temple car, Tamil Nadu, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 70. Krishṇa kills Aghāsura, Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

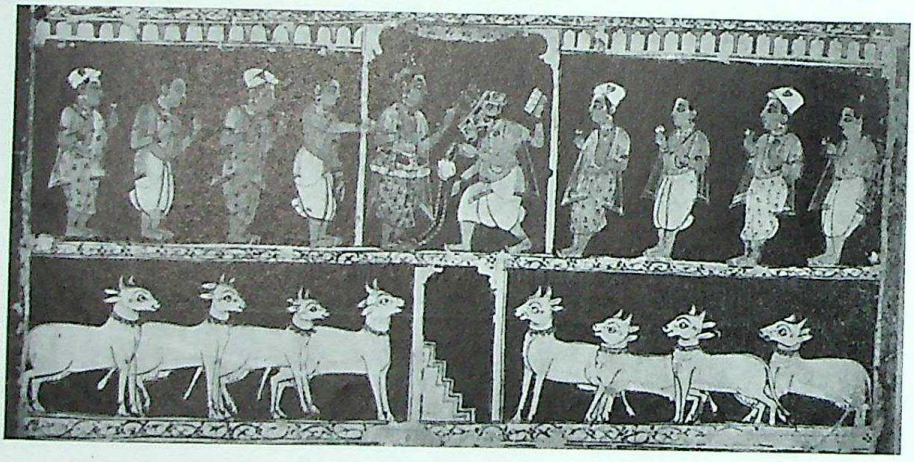

Fig. 71. Brahmā submits to Krishṇa, Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 72. Balarāma kills Dhenukāsura, Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 73. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, Gupta, 5th century, Government Museum, Mathura.

Fig. 74. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), Dharmarājaratha, Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, Pallava, 7th century.

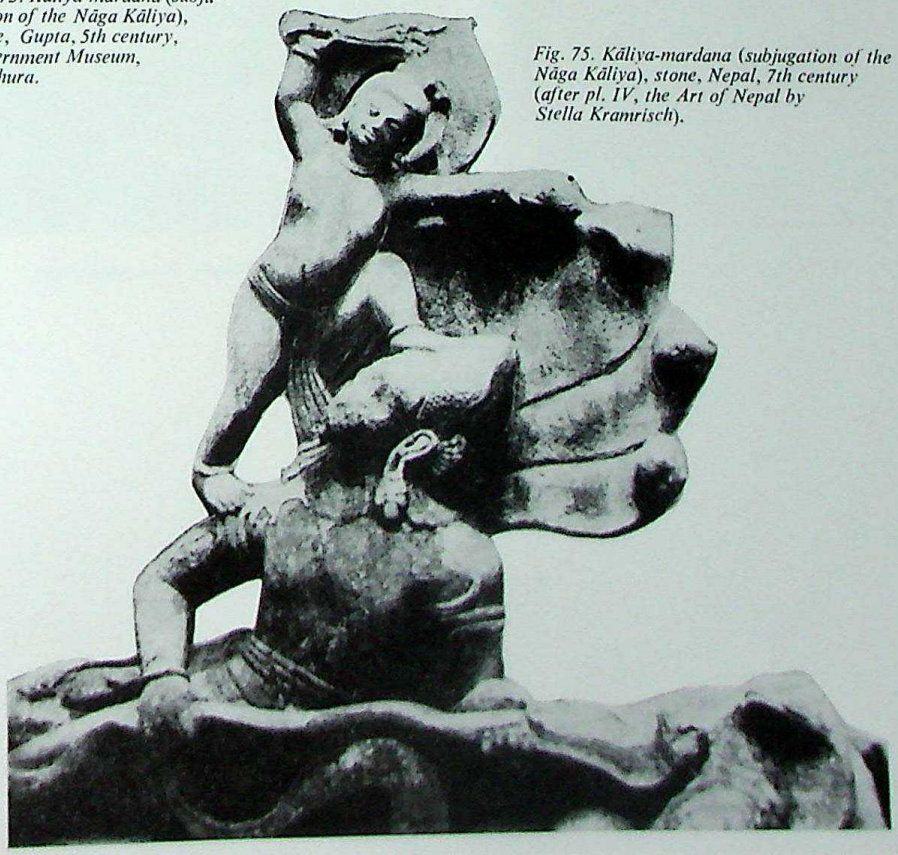

Fig. 75. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, Nepal, 7th century (after pl. IV, the Art of Nepal by Stella Kramrisch).

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Fig. 76. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, c. 7th-8th century, State Museum, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

Fig. 77. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, Harihara Temple, Osian (Rajasthan), Pratihāra, 8th-9th century.

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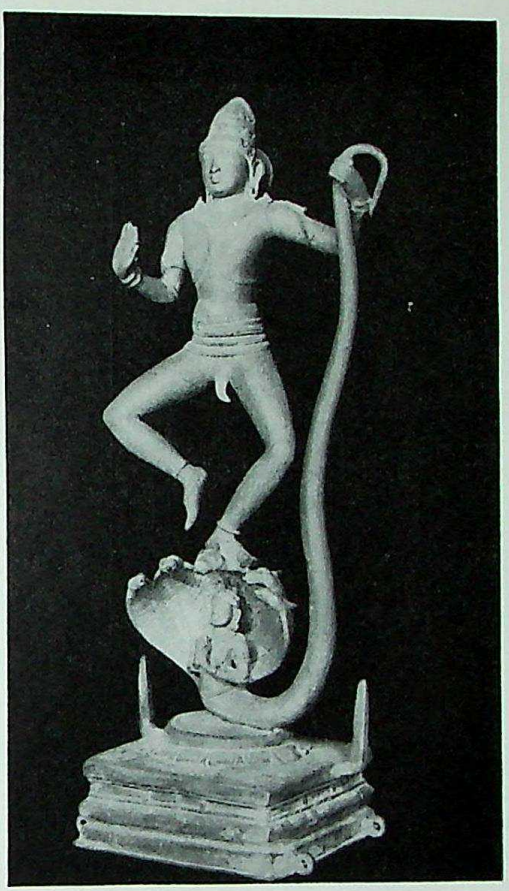

Fig. 79. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), bronze, Choḷa, 10th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 80. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, panel No. 2, on the west face, Lakshmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, 953-54.

Fig. 78. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, Vishṇu Temple, Prambanam (Indonesia), c. 9th century.

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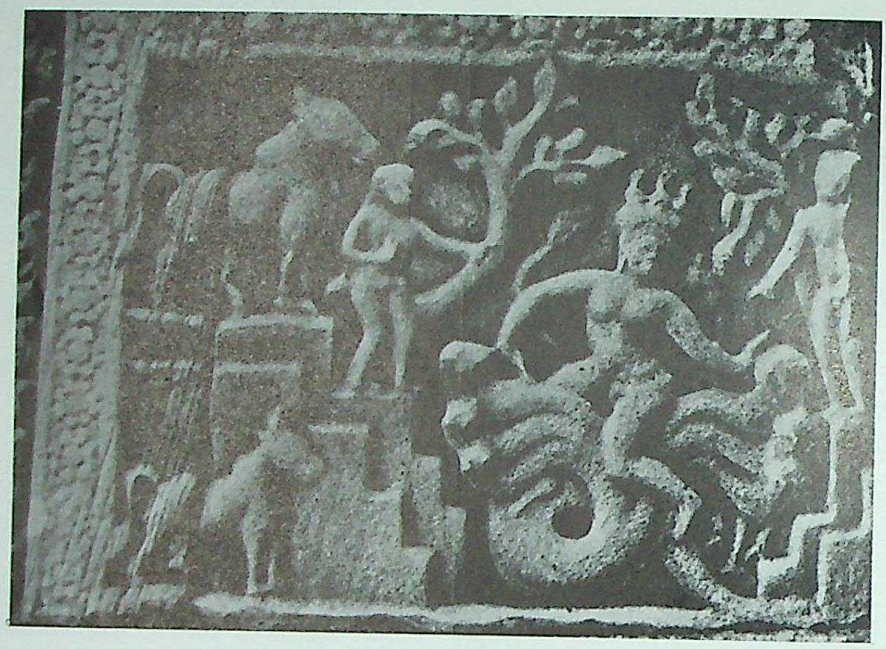

Fig. 81. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, c. 11th century, Angkor Wat (after fig. 38, Angkor : Sculptures Khméres by M. Giteau).

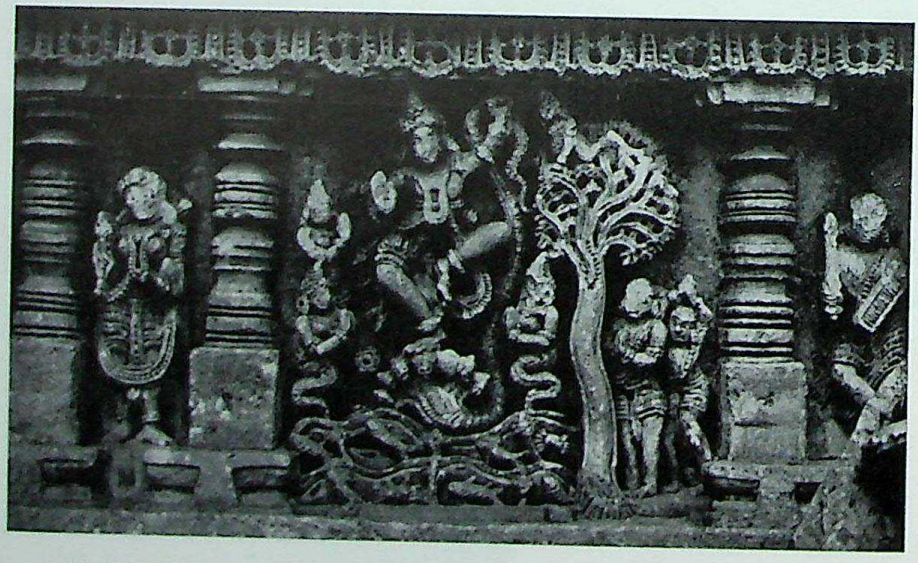

Fig. 82. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, Amriteśvara Temple, Amritapura, Karṇāṭaka, 1196.

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Fig. 84. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, Viṭhaldeo Temple Pillar, Hampi, 15th-16th century.

Fig. 85. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), illustration to the Gīta Govinda, c. 1800, Orissa, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 83. Kāliya-mardana (subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), stone, Dilwara Temple, Mount Abu, 13th century.

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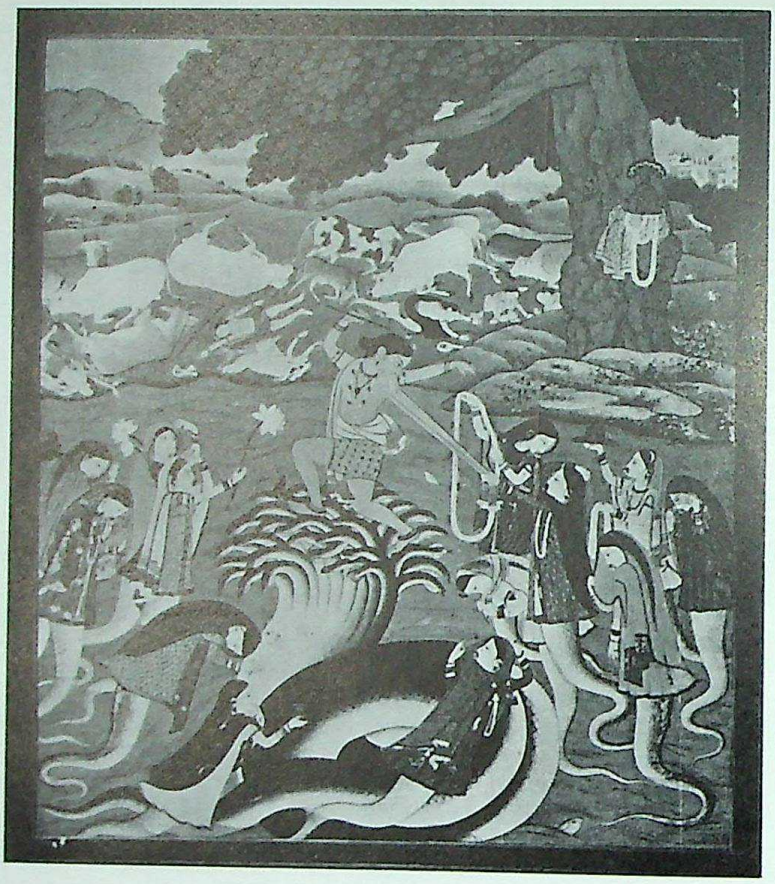

Fig. 86. Kāliya-mardana (the subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), Kangra Style, late 18th century, Punjab Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

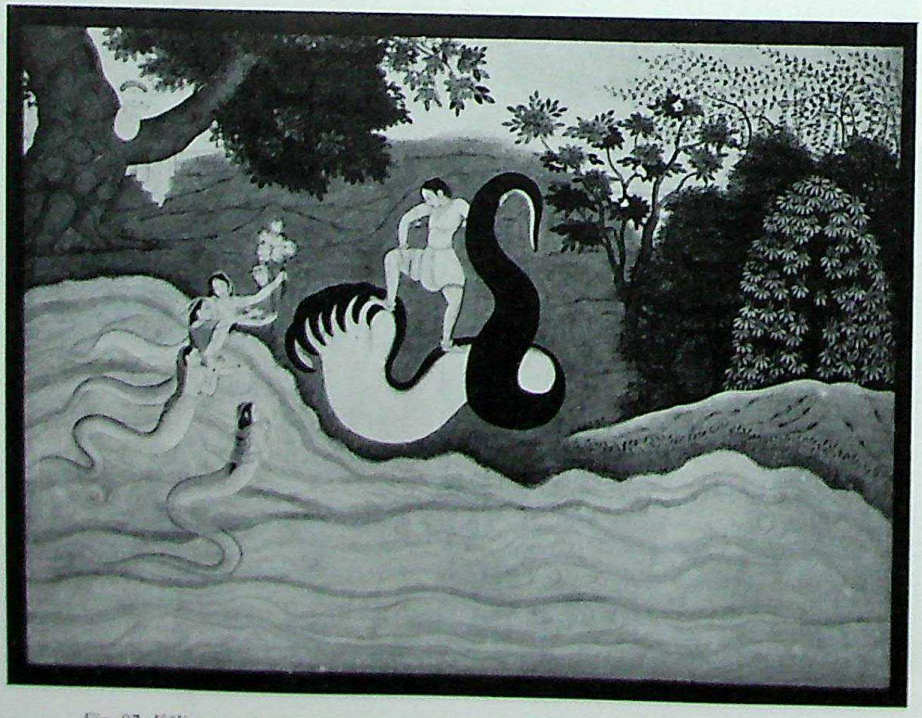

Fig. 87. Kāliya-mardana (the subjugation of the Nāga Kāliya), Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-65, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 88. Krishṇa swallows the forest fire and saves the Gopas and Gopīs from the fire on the bank of the Yamunā, Kulu, c. 1794, Punjab Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

Fig. 89. Pralamba-vadha (killing of the Demon Pralamba), terracotta, Gupta, c. 5th century, Allahabad Museum, Allahabad.

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Fig. 90. Pralamba-vadha (killing of the Demon Pralamba), stone, Paharpur Temple, Bangladesh, c. 800 .

Fig. 92. Pralamba-vadha (killing of the Demon Pralamba), Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 91. Pralamba-vadha (killing of the Demon Pralamba), Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 93. Krishṇa swallows the forest fire, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Mewar, c. 1700, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

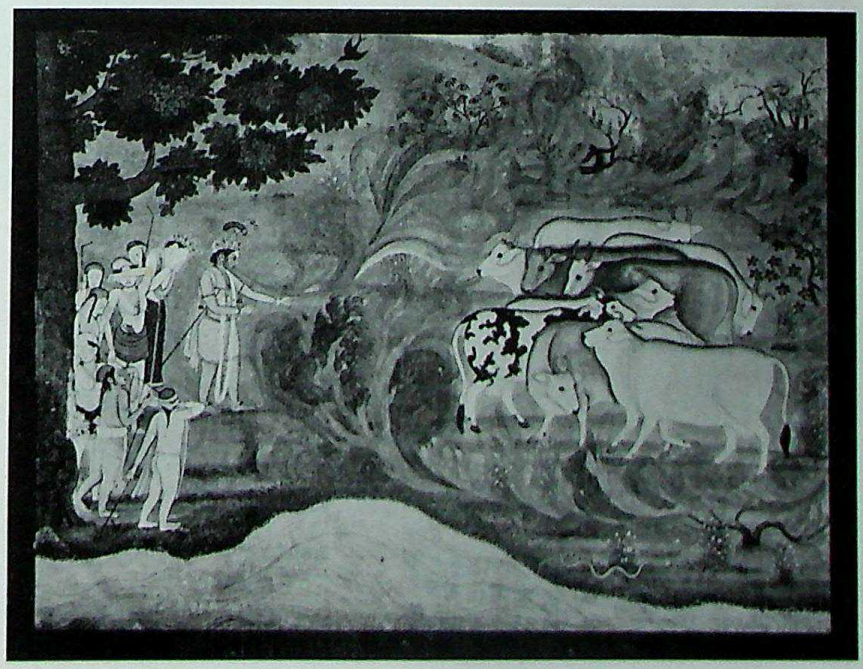

Fig. 94. Krishṇa swallows the forest fire, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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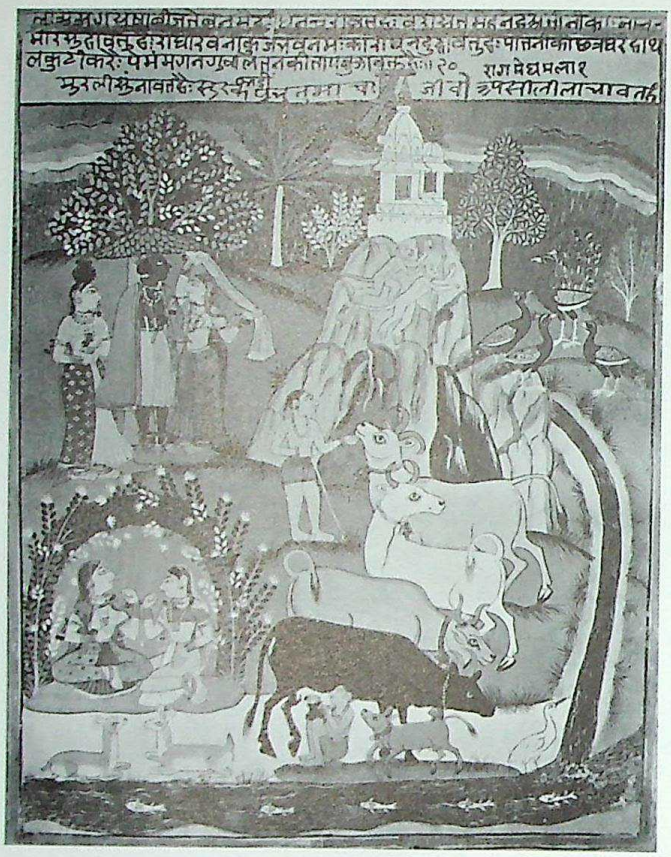

Fig. 96. Rāga Meghamalhāra, showing Krishna and the Gopīs under an umbrella, Mewar, c. 1650, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 95. Veṇugopāla, Somnathpur Temple, Karṇāṭaka, 1268.

Fig. 97. Krishna and Gopa, early Basohli, end of the 17th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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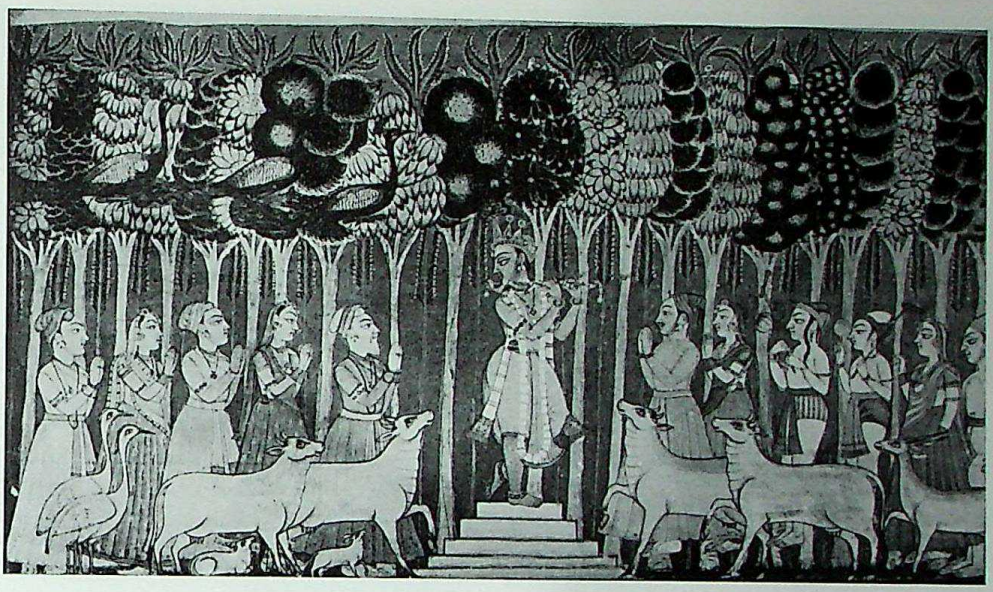

Fig. 98. Krishṇa's magic flute, Kulu, c. 1775, National Museum, New Delhi.

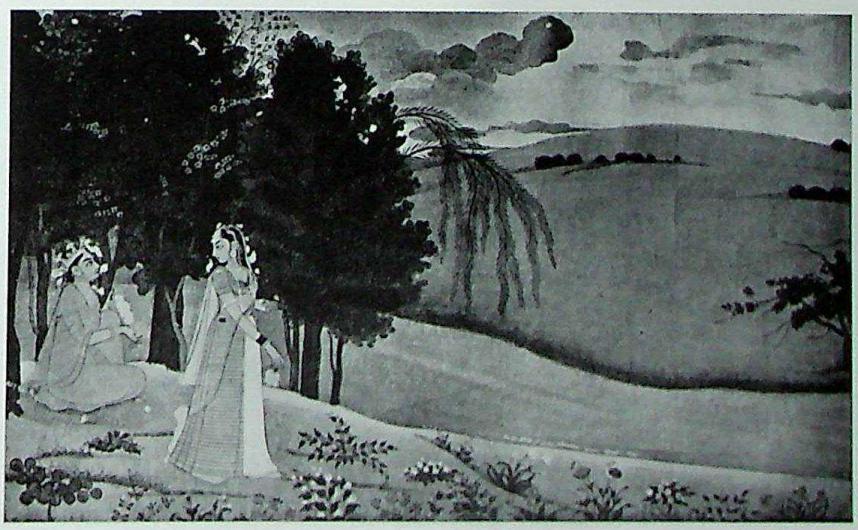

Fig. 99. Krishṇa and Gopī, Guler Style, c. 1775, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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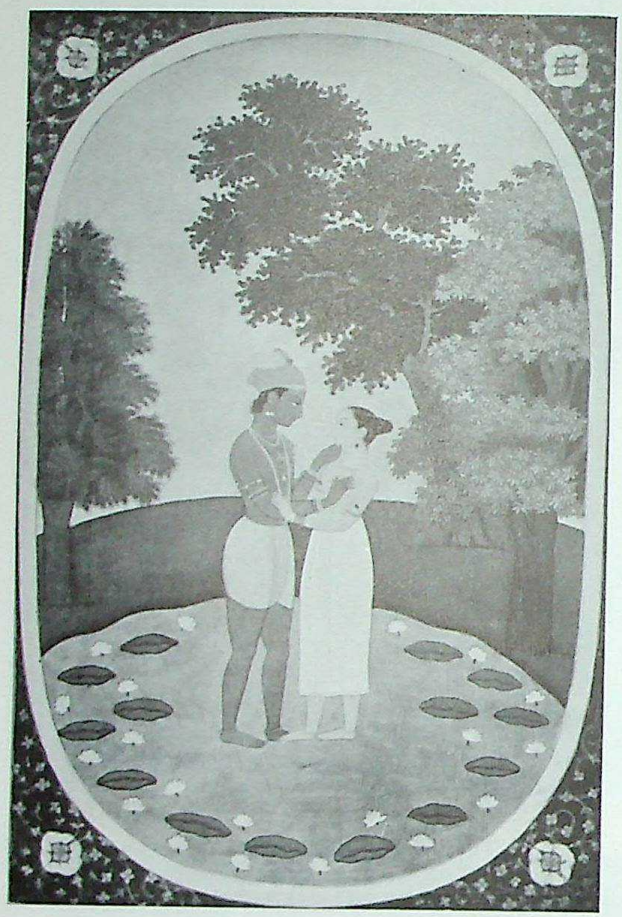

Fig. 100. Rādhā and Krishṇa in a lotus pond, Guler-Kangra Style, c. 1780, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 101. Vastraharaṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of the cowherd-girls), stone, Gorantla, Andhra Pradesh, c. 16th century.

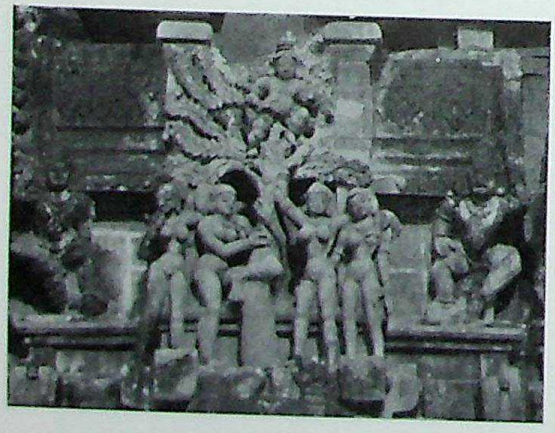

Fig. 102. Vastraharaṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of tke cowherd-girls), stucco, Gopuram, Brihadiśvara Temple, Tanjore, c. 16th century.

Fig. 103. Vastraharaṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of the cowherd-girls), terracotta, Jor-Bangla Temple, Vishnupur, West Bengal, 1655.

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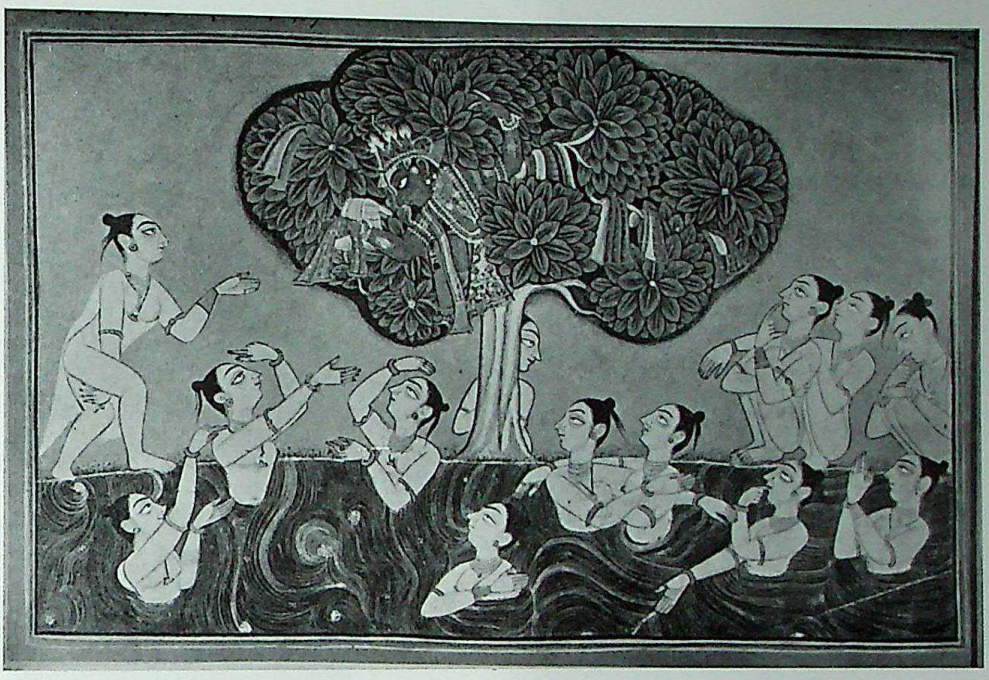

Fig. 104. Vastraharaṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of the cowherd-girls), Mankot, c. 1725, Punjab Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

Fig. 105. Vastraharaṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of the cowherd-girls), Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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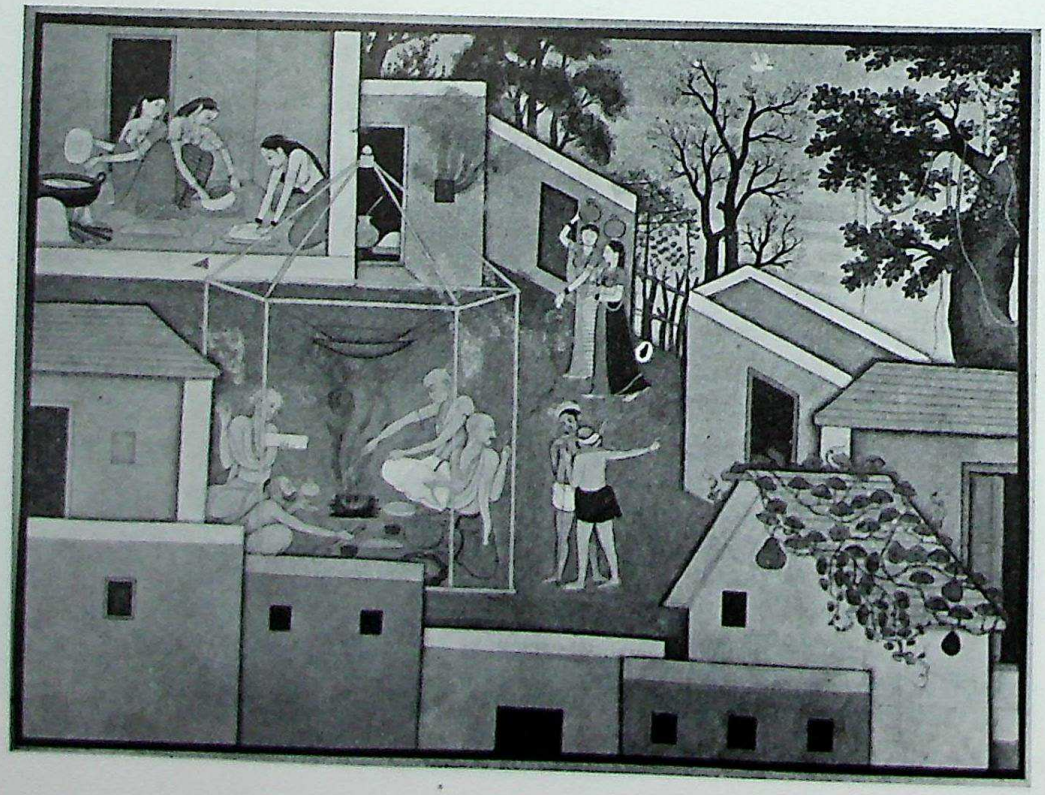
Fig. 106. Vastraharaṇa (Krishṇa steals the clothes of the cowherd-girls), painting, Ettumanur, Kottayam District, Kerala, c. 1800.

Fig. 107. Gopa boys sent by Krishṇa to get food from the Brāhmaṇas engaged in sacrifices, Kangra style, 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.



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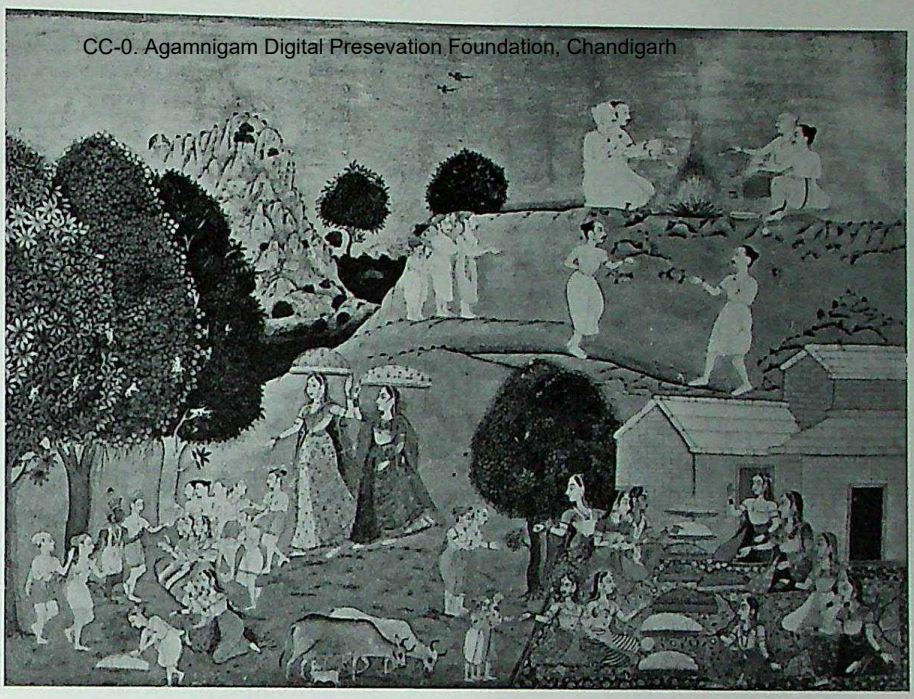

Fig. 108. The wives of the Mathura Brāhmaṇas bring food for Krishṇa, Kangra Style, 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 109. Krishna raises Mount Govardhana, terracotta, Rangmahal, Gupta, 4th-5th century, Bikaner Museum, Bikaner.

Fig. 110. Krishna raises Mount Govardhana, Mandor Pillar, stone, Gupta, 4th-5th century, Sardar Museum, Jodhpur.

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Fig. 111. Krishna raises Mount Govardhana, stone, Gupta, 5th century, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 112. Krishna raises Mount Govardhana, stone, Gupta, 5th century, Deogarh.

Fig. 113. Krishna raises Mount Govardhana, stone, Gupta, 5th-6th century, Mathura, Government Museum, Mathura.

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Fig. 114. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, stone, upper Śivālaya Vimāna, early Western Chalukya, Bādāmi, c. 600.

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Fig. 116. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, stone, Pallava, 7th century, Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu.

Fig. 115. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, stone, Vat Koh (Ta kev), 6th century, Musée National de Phnom-penh (after fig. 3, Angkor: sculptures Khmères by M. Giteau).

Fig. 117. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, Hoysaleśvara Temple, Halebid, Karṇāṭaka, 12th century.

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Fig. 118. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, late 16th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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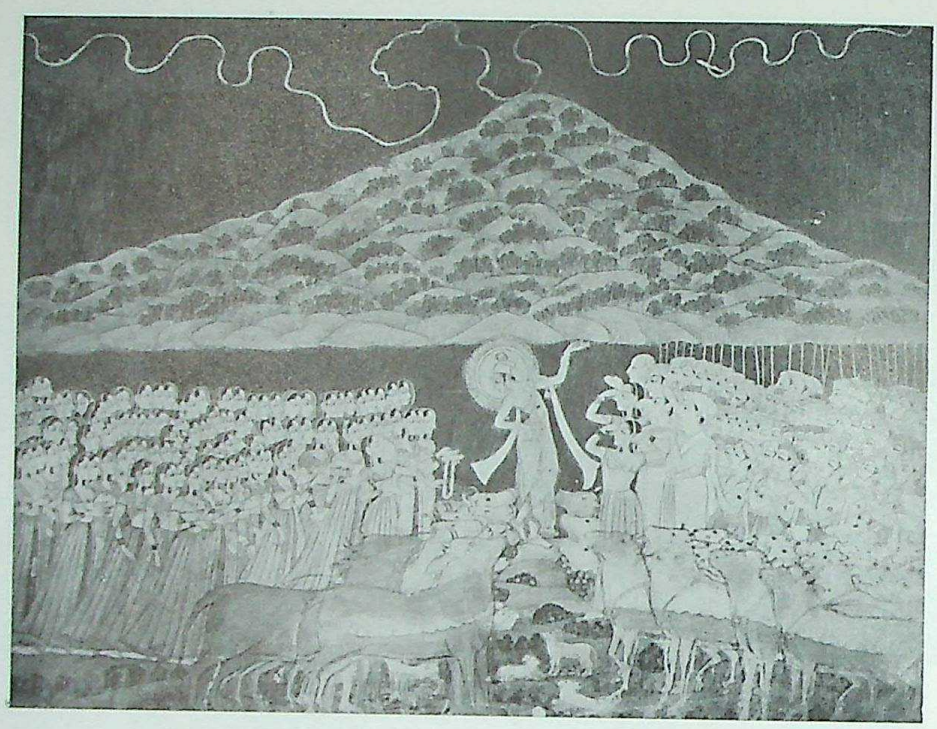

Fig. 119. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, Kishangarh, by Nihal Chand, 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 120. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, wood-carving from a temple car, Tamil Nadu, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

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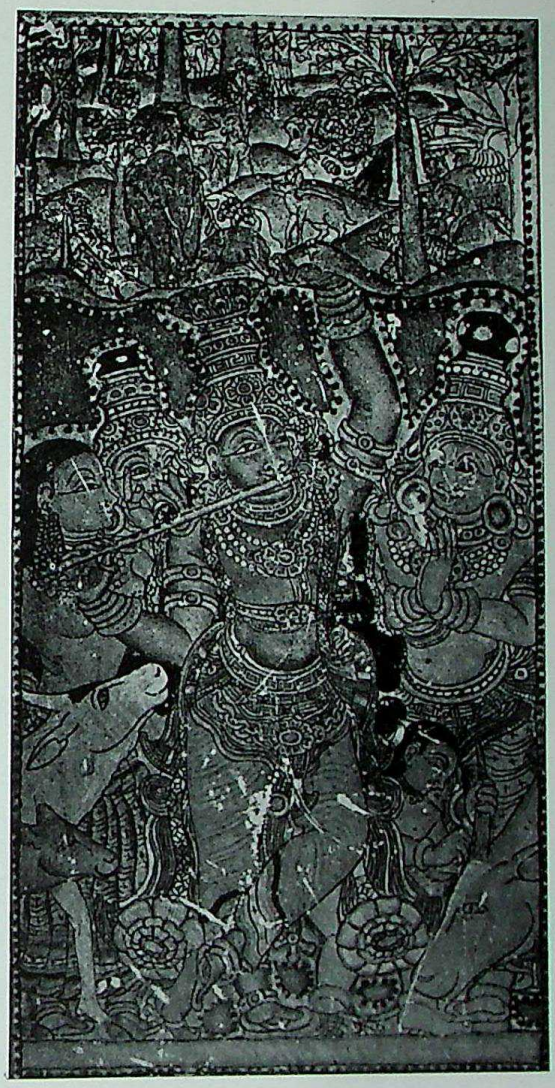

Fig. 121. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, painting, Elangannuppazha, Ernakulam District, Kerala, c. 1800.

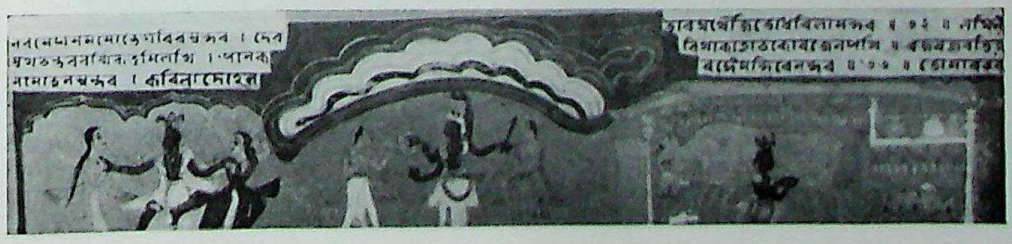

Fig. 122. Krishṇa raises Mount Govardhana, illustration to the Bhāgavata, Daśamaskandha, c. 18th century, Assam.

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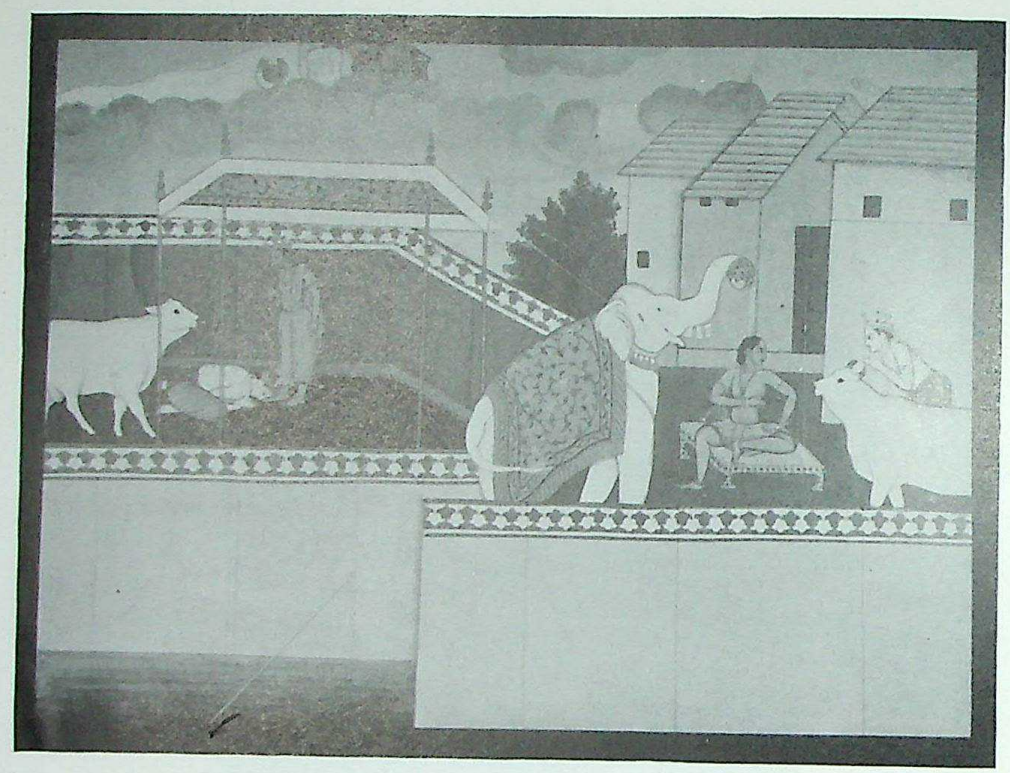

Fig. 123. The Abhisheka of Krishṇa by Airāvata and Surabhi, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

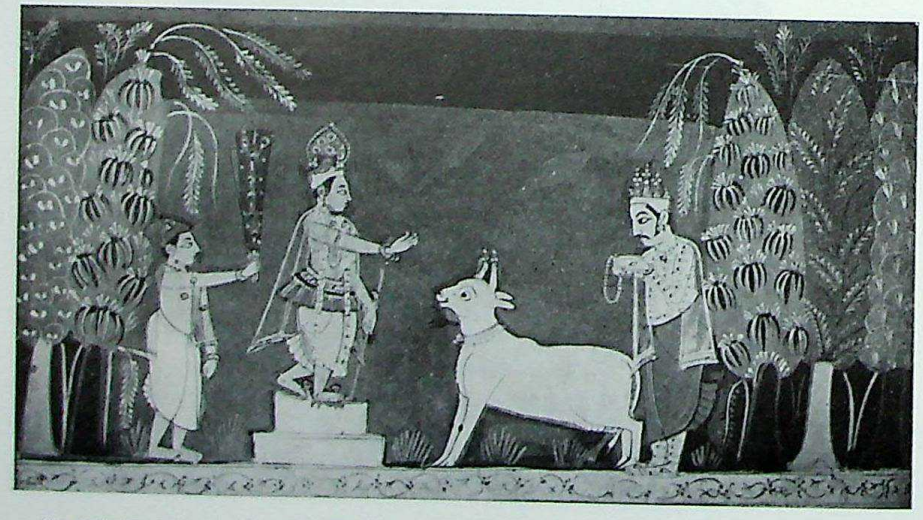

Fig. 124. Surabhi and Indra praise Krishṇa, Malwa, c. 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 125. Krishṇa rescues Nanda from Varuṇa's abode, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 126. Krishṇa and the Gopīs, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765 (after plate on p. 182, Painting of India by Douglas Barrett and Basil Gray).

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Fig. 127. Krishṇa with the Gopīs, Guler Style, 18th century (after fig. 2, Kangra Paintings of the Gīta Govinda by Dr. M. S. Randhawa).

Fig. 128. Krishṇa disappears with his favourite Gopī, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 129. The favourite Gopī deserted by Krishṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

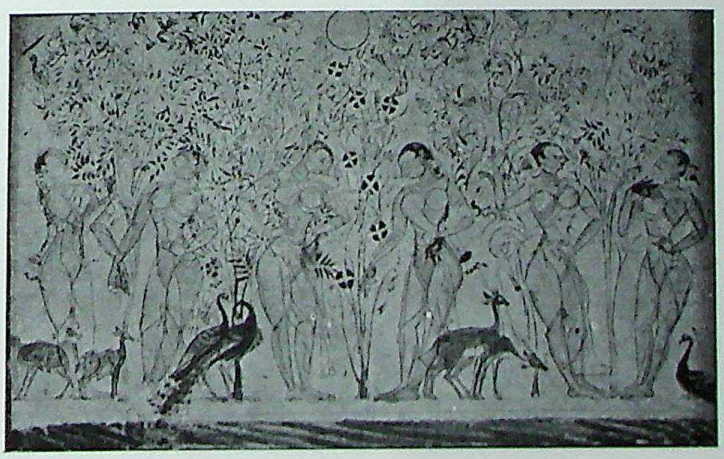

Fig. 130. Gopīs searching for Krishṇa, Orissa, c. 17th century, Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta.

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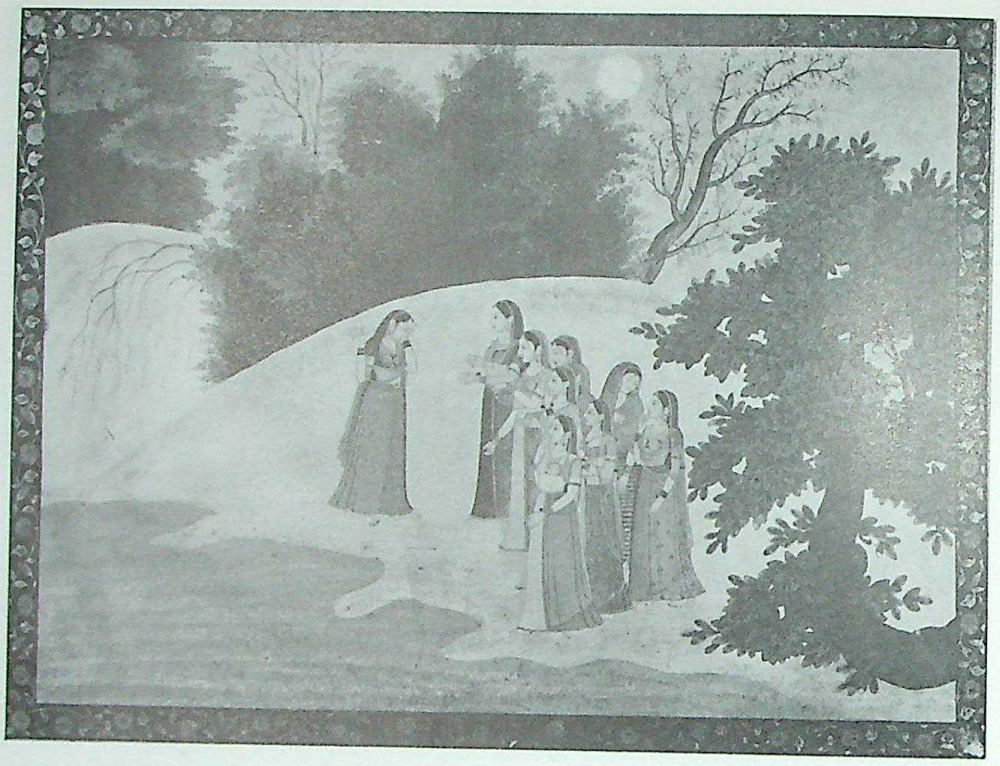

Fig. 131. Gopīs searching for Krishṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

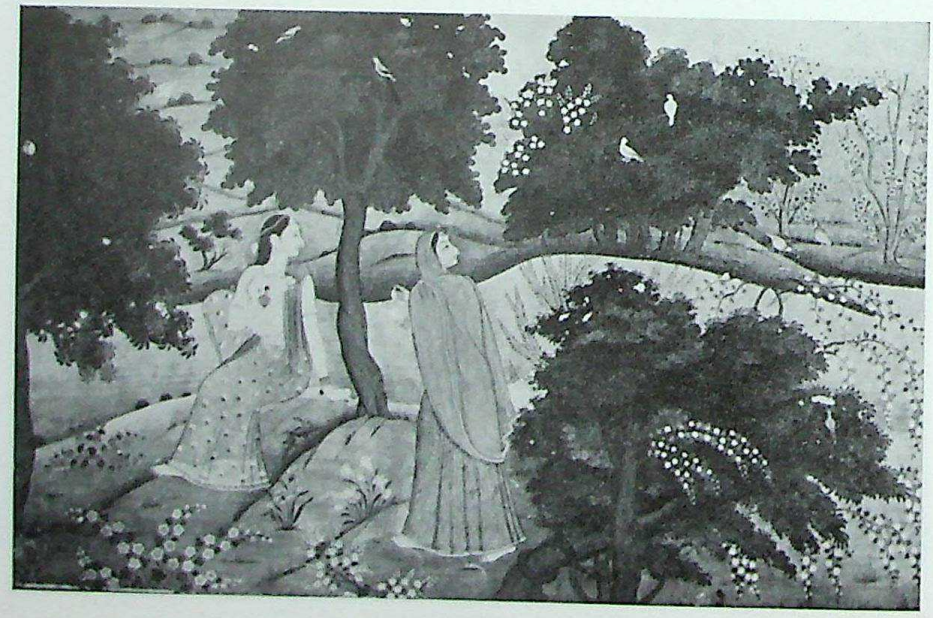

Fig. 132. Rādhā and her Sakhī awaiting Krishṇa, Guler, 18th century (after colour pl. III, Kangra Paintings of the Gīta Govinda by Dr. M. S. Randhawa).

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Fig. 133. Rāsamaṇḍala, Mewar, 1650, National Museum, New Delhi.

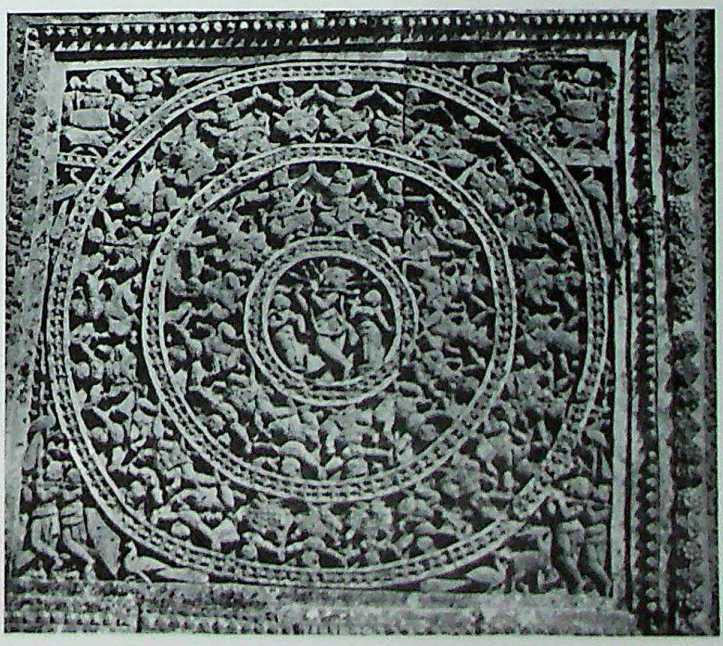

Fig. 134. Rāsamaṇḍala, terracotta, Jor-Bangla Temple, Vishnupur, West Bengal, 1655.

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Fig. 135. Rāsamaṇḍala, book-cover, West Bengal, late 17th century, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

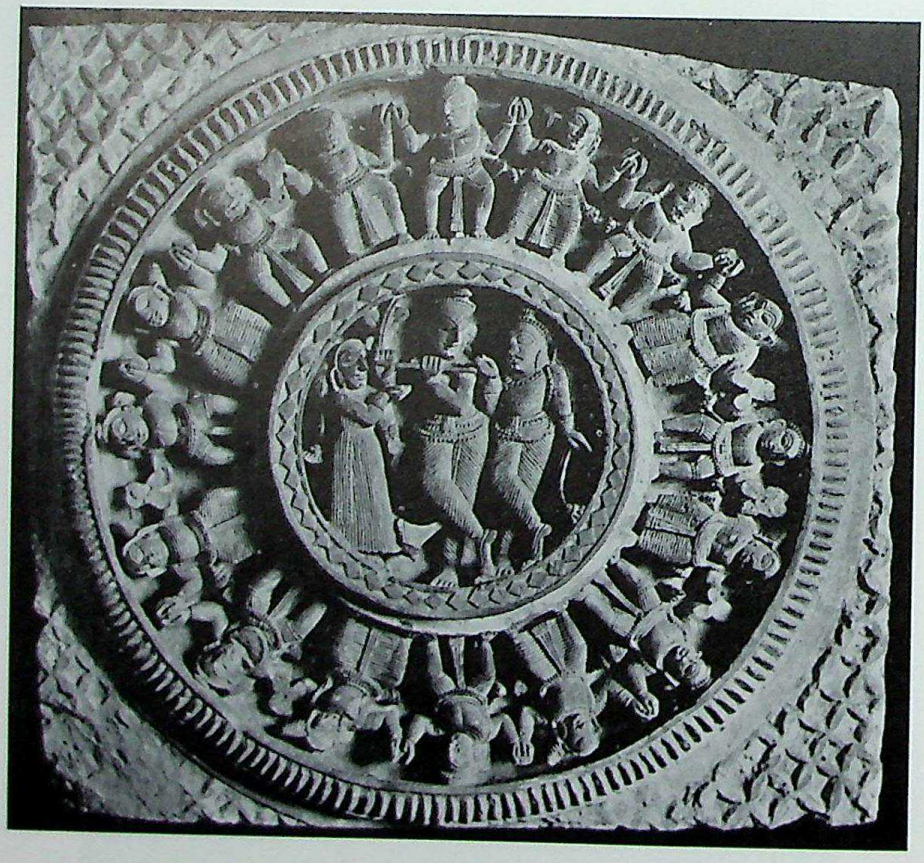

Fig. 136. Rāsamaṇḍala, terracotta, West Bengal, late 17th century, Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta.

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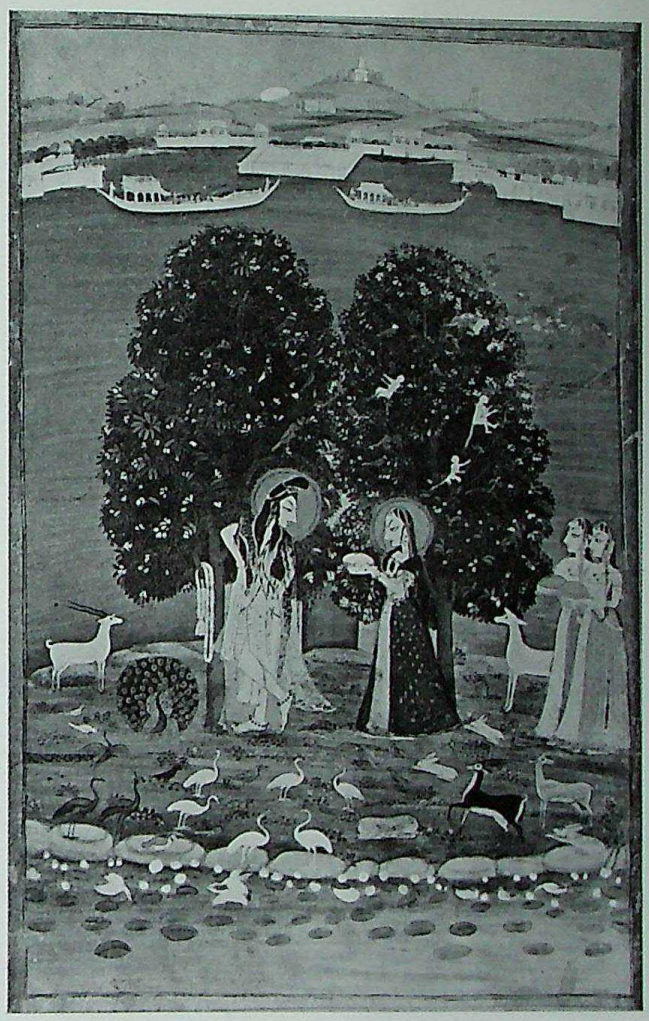

Fig. 137. Rādhā and Krishṇa near a lotus pool, Kishangarh, 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 138. Rādhā being led to Krishṇa, Basohli, c. 1730, National Museum, New Delhi.

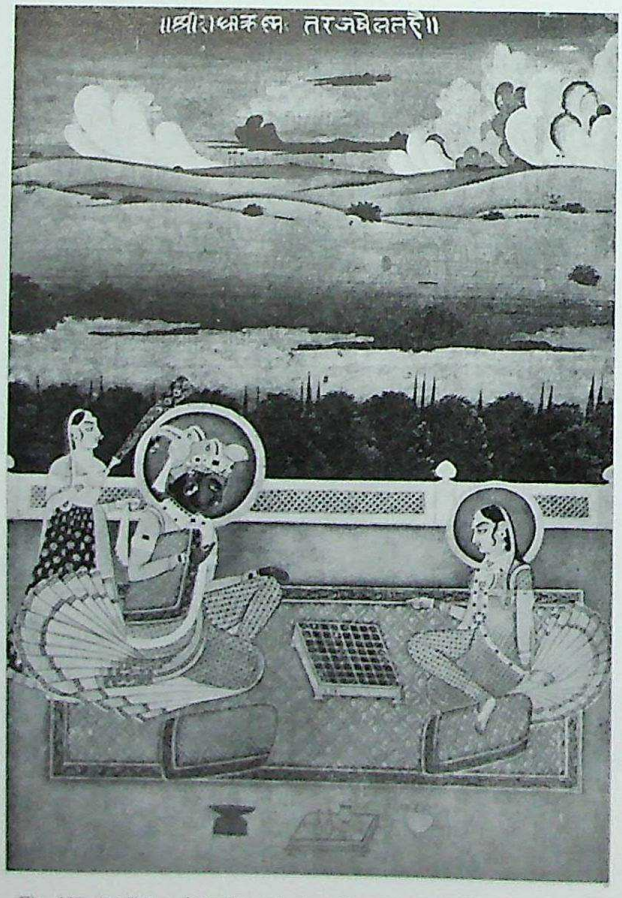

Fig. 139. Rādhā and Krishṇa playing dice, Jaipur School, early 19th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 140. Worship of Rādhā and Krishṇa, Kishangarh, c. 1750, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 141. Rādhā and Krishṇa watching fire-works, Kishangarh, c. 1750, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 142. Rādhā and Krishṇa (?), Paharpur Temple, Bangladesh, c. 8th century.

Fig. 143. Rādhā and Krishṇa, Guler-Kangra Style, 1750, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

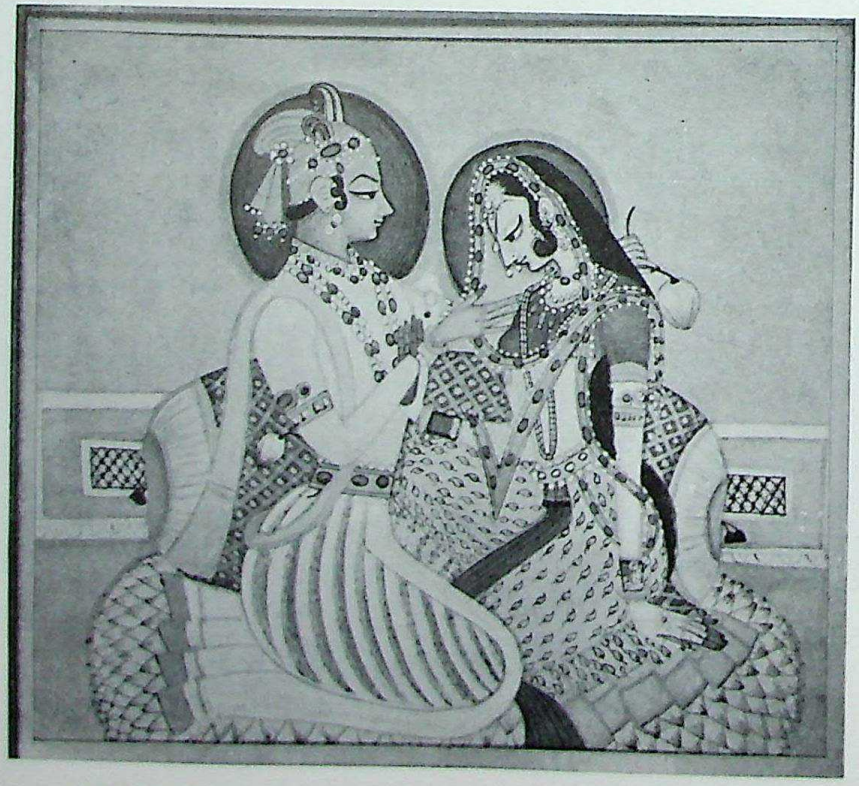

Fig. 144. Rādhā and Krishṇa, Kishangarh, c. 1800, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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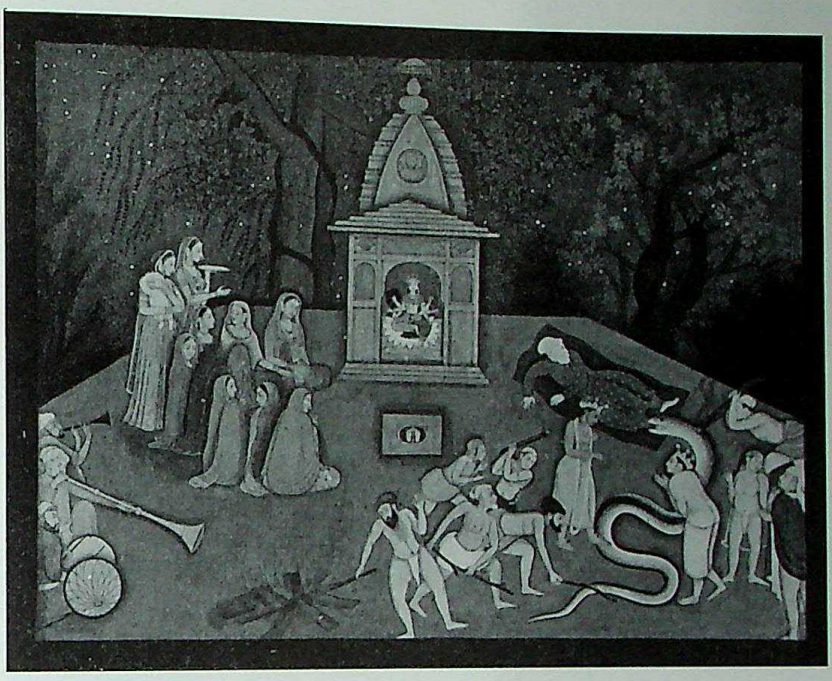

Fig. 145. Salvation of Sudarśana, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 146. Krishṇa kills the Bull-demon, Arishṭa, Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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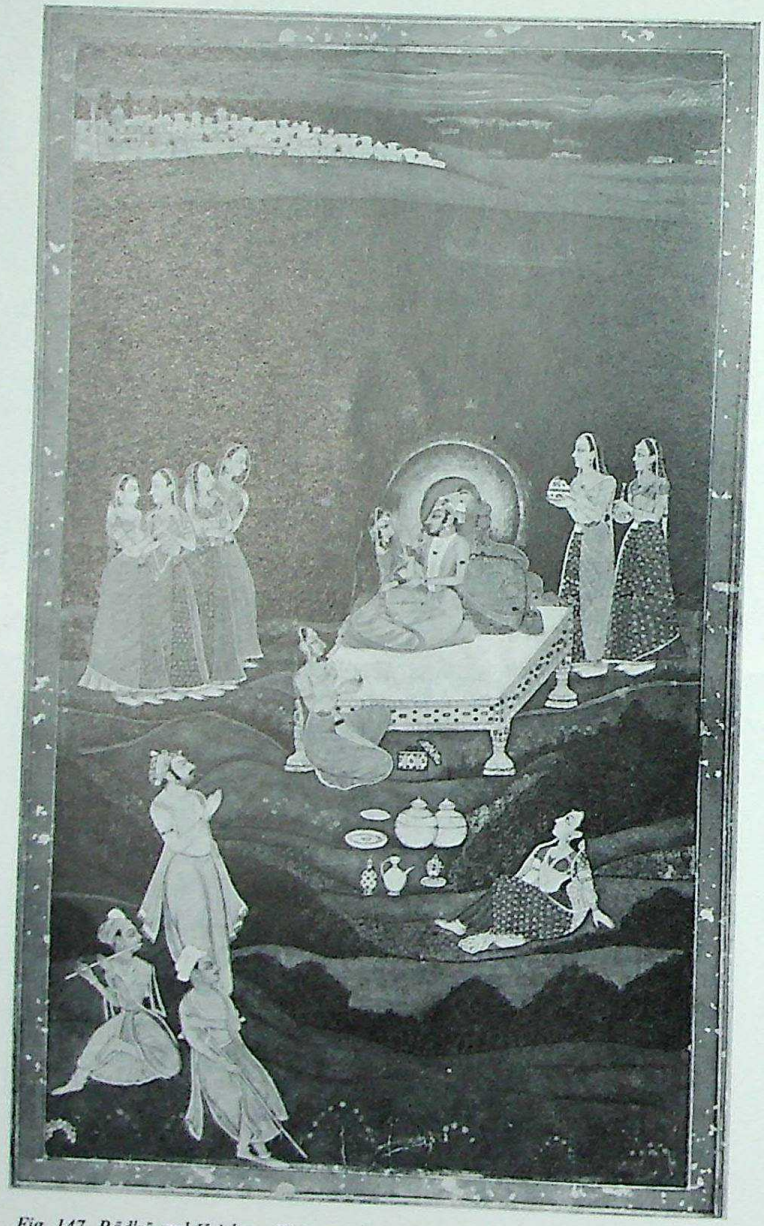

Fig. 147. Rādhā and Krishṇa, Kishangarh, c. 1750, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 148. Krishṇa kills the Horse-demon, Keśī(?), stone, 5th century, Valabhi, present whereabouts not known.

Fig. 150. Krishṇa kills the Horse-demon, Keśī, stone, Paharpur Temple, Bangladesh, c. 8th century.

Fig. 149. Krishṇa kills the Horse-demon, Keśī, stone, Pratihāra, 8th-9th century, Abaneri, Amer Museum, Rajasthan.

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Fig. 151. Krishṇa kills Vyomāsura, Kulhadar group, c. 1550, National Museum, New Delhi.

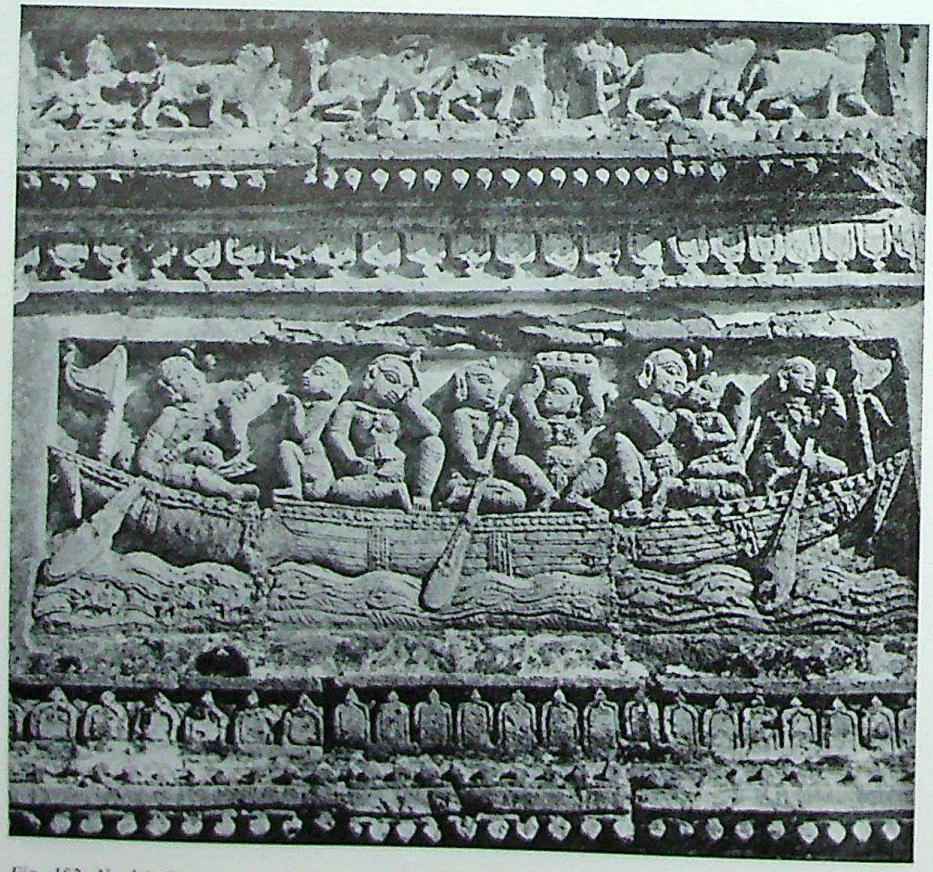

Fig. 152. Naukāvilāsa scene of Krishṇa with Rādhā (Krishṇa is shown twice, once at the oar of the boat on the extreme left refusing to cross the river and take the Gopis to the other bank of the Yamunā and again, at the right with Rādhā seated on his lap), terracotta, Vishnupur, West Bengal, 1655.

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Fig. 153. Dānalīlā, terracotta, Gupta, 4th-5th century, Bikaner Museum, Bikaner.

Fig. 154. Dānalīlā depicted on a silver coin of Rāma-taṅkā type, 17th century (after fig. 9, pl. VI, Journal, Numismatic Society of India, Vol. XXVIII, Part I, 1966).

Fig. 155. Dānalīlā, and Rādhā arresting Krishṇa, Bilaspur Style, c. 1765-70, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

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Fig. 156. Nanda bidding farewell to Krishṇa and Balarāma, Kulhadar group, c. 1550, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 157. Akrūra taking Krishṇa and Balarāma to Mathura, painting, probably Delhi—Agra region, c. 1550, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

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Fig. 158. Akrūra taking Krishṇa and Balarāma to Mathura (the Gopīs obstructing the car), Bengal School, late 17th century, Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta.

Fig. 159. Krishṇa revealing his divinity to Akrūra, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765 (after the colour plate, No. XVIII, Kangra Paintings of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa by Dr. M. S. Randhawa).

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Fig. 160. Kubjānugraha (favour shown to Kubjā), panel No. 8, on the west face, Lakshmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, 953-54.

Fig. 161. Kubjānugraha (favour shown to Kubjā), Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 162. Krishṇa kills the washerman, Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 163. Krishṇa killing the Elephant Kuvalayāpiḍa, Harihara Temple, Osian, Rajasthan, 8th-9th century.

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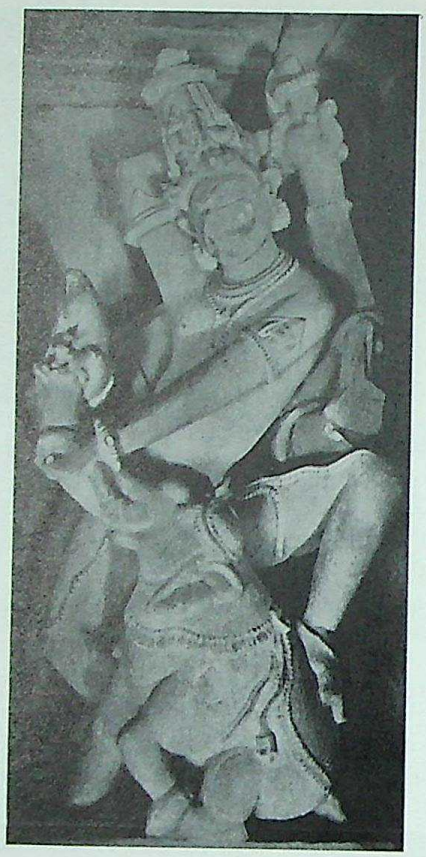

Fig. 164. Krishṇa killing the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, panel No. 12, on the south face, Lakshmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, 953-54.

Fig. 165. Krishṇa killing the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, Malwa, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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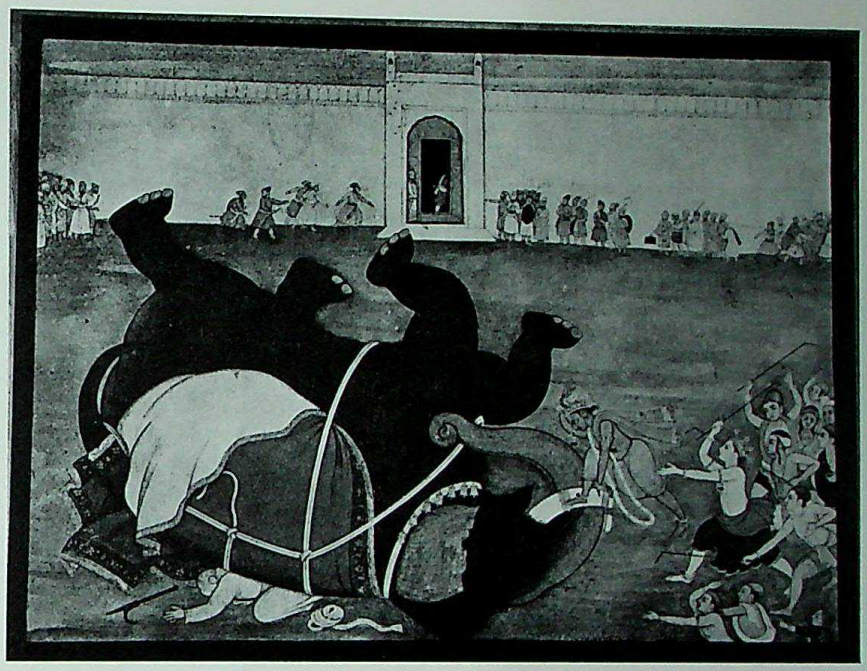

Fig. 166. Krishṇa killing the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 167. Krishṇa killing the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, wood-carving, temple car, Tamil Nadu, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 168. Fight with Chāṇūra and Mushṭika, stone, Paharpur Temple, Bangladesh, c. 800.

Fig. 170. Fight with Chāṇūra, panel No. 10, on the south face, Lakshmaṇa Temple, Khajuraho, 953-954.

Fig. 169. Fight with Chāṇūra and Mushṭika and Kaṁsa's anxiety, Harihara Temple, Osian, Rajasthan, 8th-9th century.

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Fig. 171. Krishṇa kills Kaṁsa, illustration to the Harivaṁśa, Mughal, c. 1590, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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Fig. 172. Krishṇa kills Kaṁsa, Basohli, c. 1725, Punjab Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

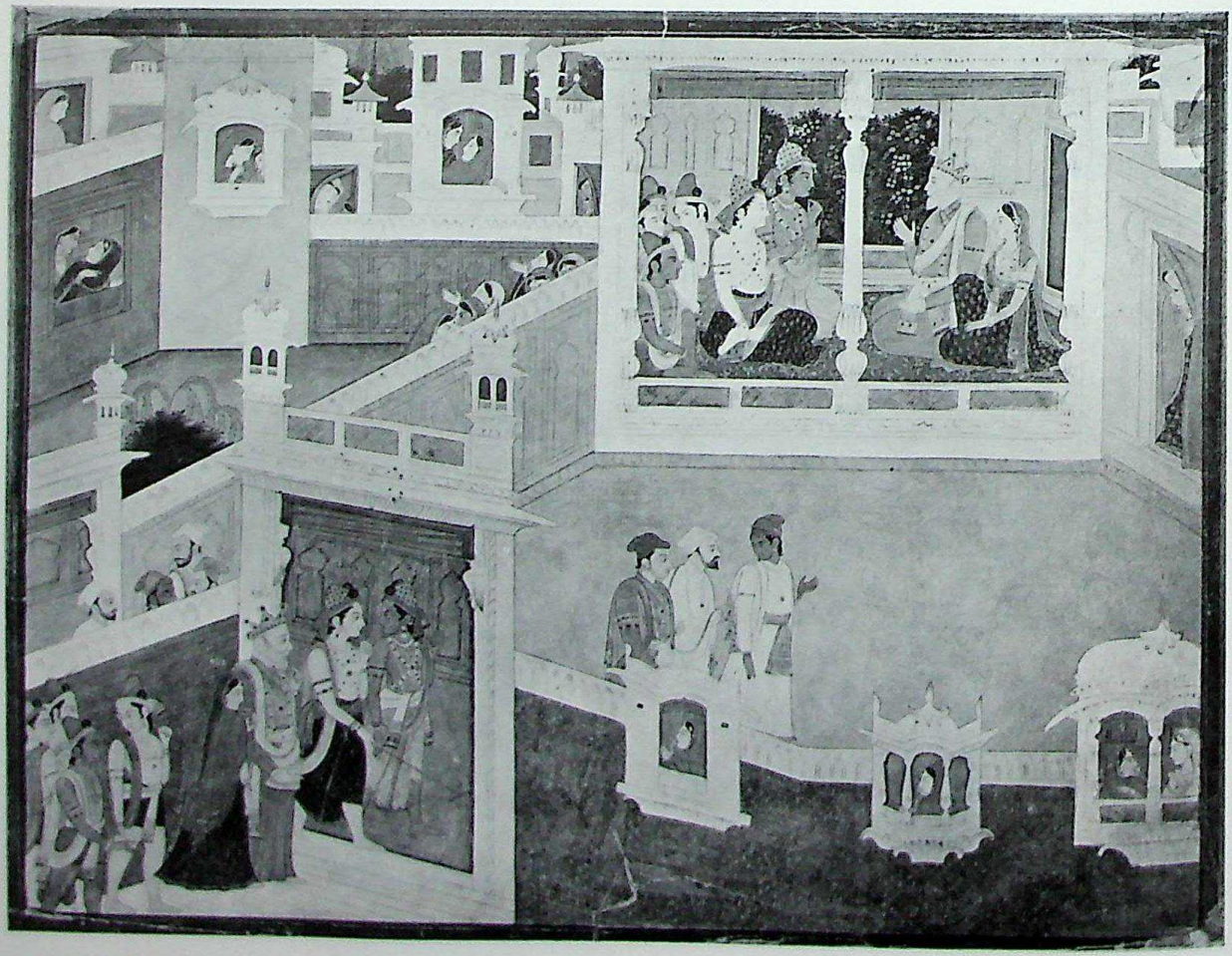

Fig. 173. Krishṇa and Balarāma meet their parents after the killing of Kaṁsa, Kangra Style, 1790, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

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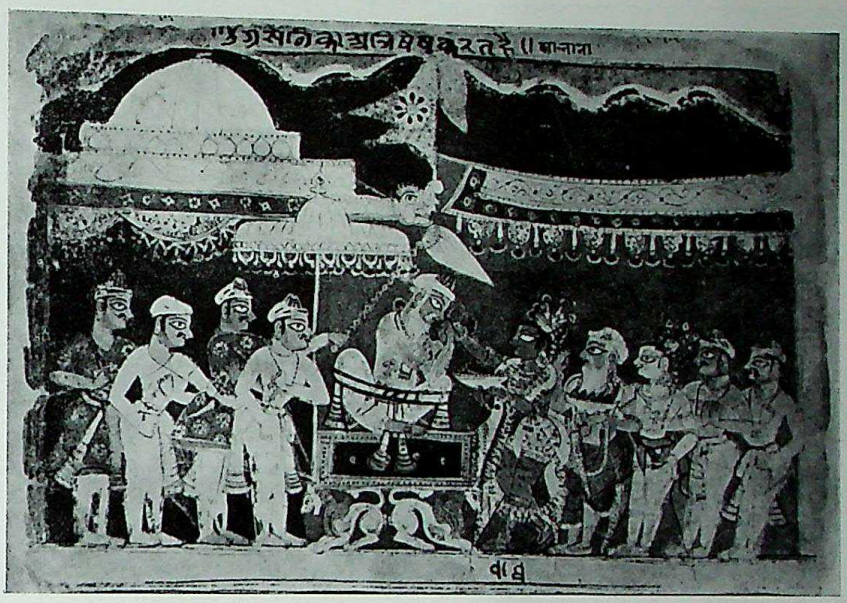

Fig. 174. Krishna anointing Ugrasena after the death of Kaṁsa, Kulhadar group, c. 1550 (after the plate published in Allen Memorial Art Museum's Bulletin, Vol. XXVII, No. 2).

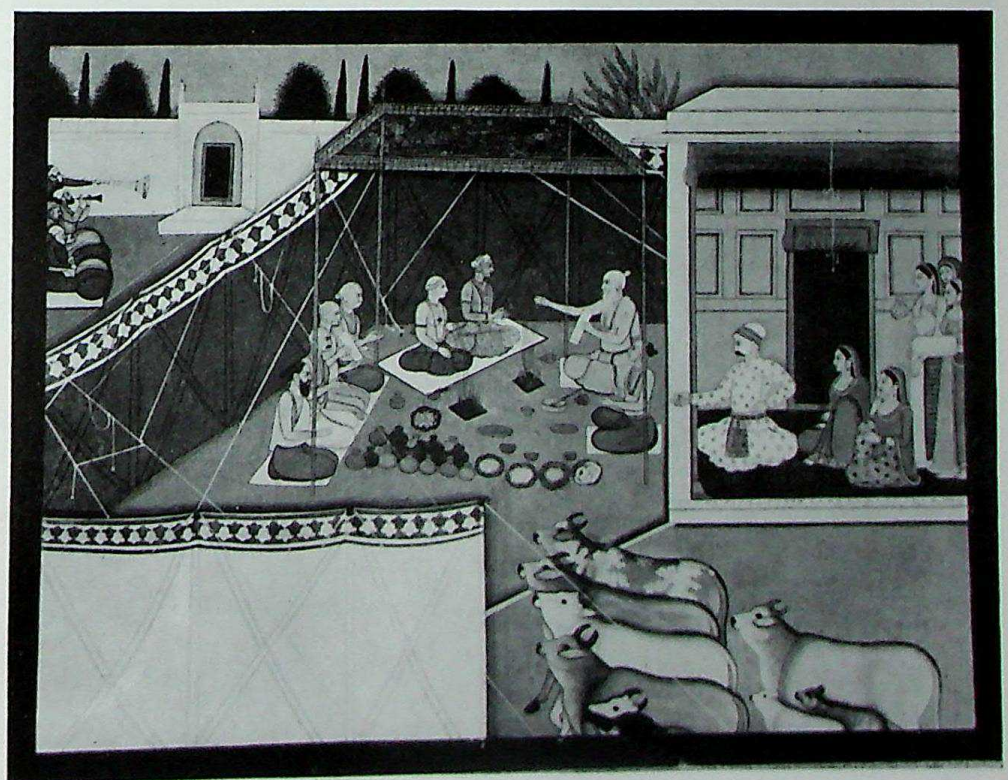

Fig. 175. The Upanayana (sacred-thread ceremony of Krishna and Balarāma), Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-1765, National Museum, New Delhi.

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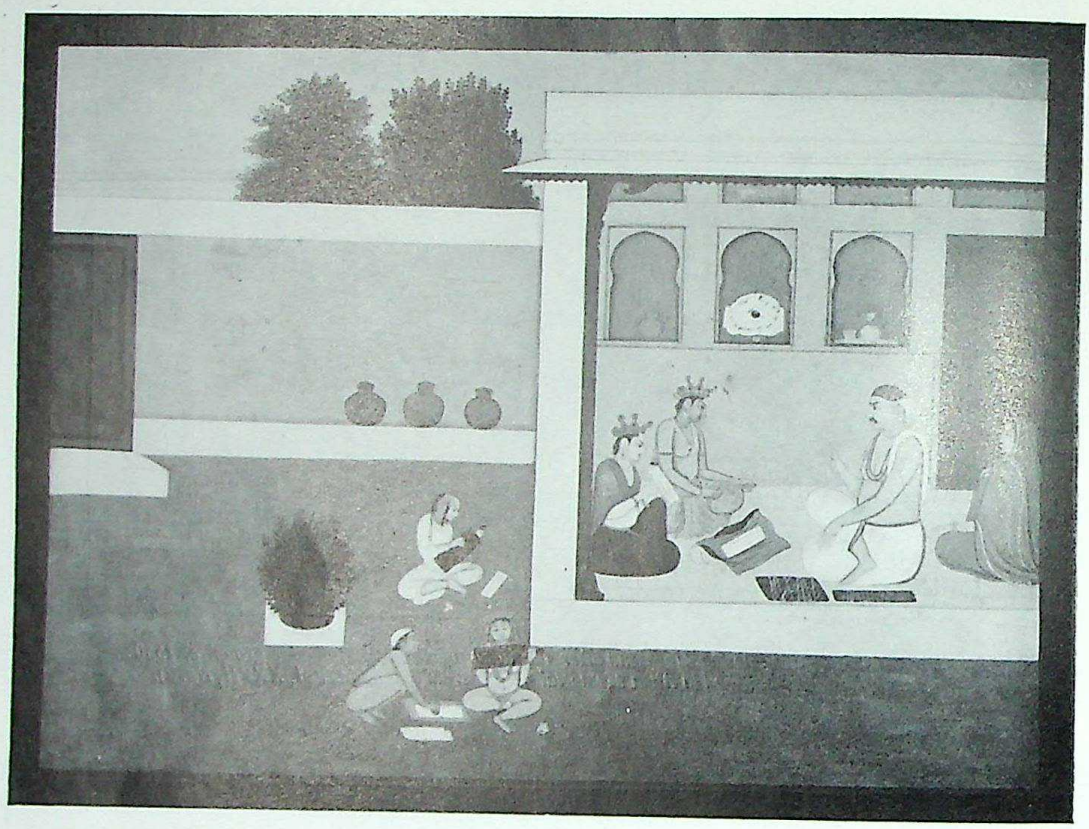

Fig. 176. Krishṇa and Balarāma in Sāndīpani's School, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler style, c. 1760-65, National Museum, New Delhi.

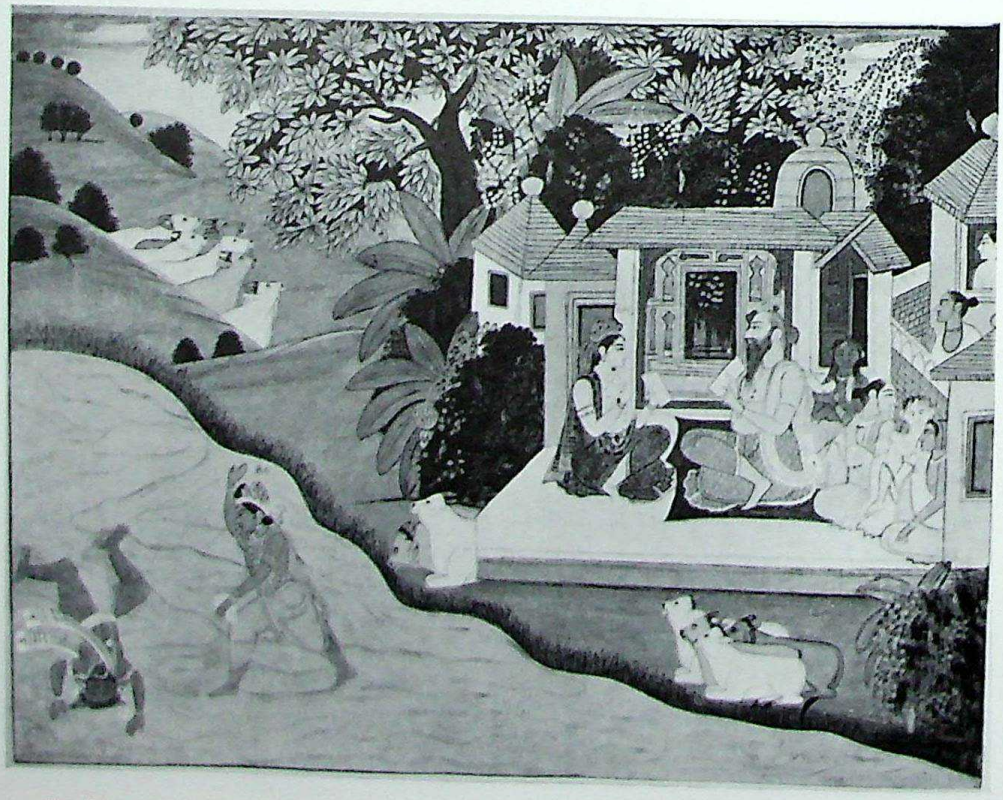

Fig. 177. Krishṇa killing Śaṅkhāsura and taking away Pāñchajanya, Kangra Style, early 19th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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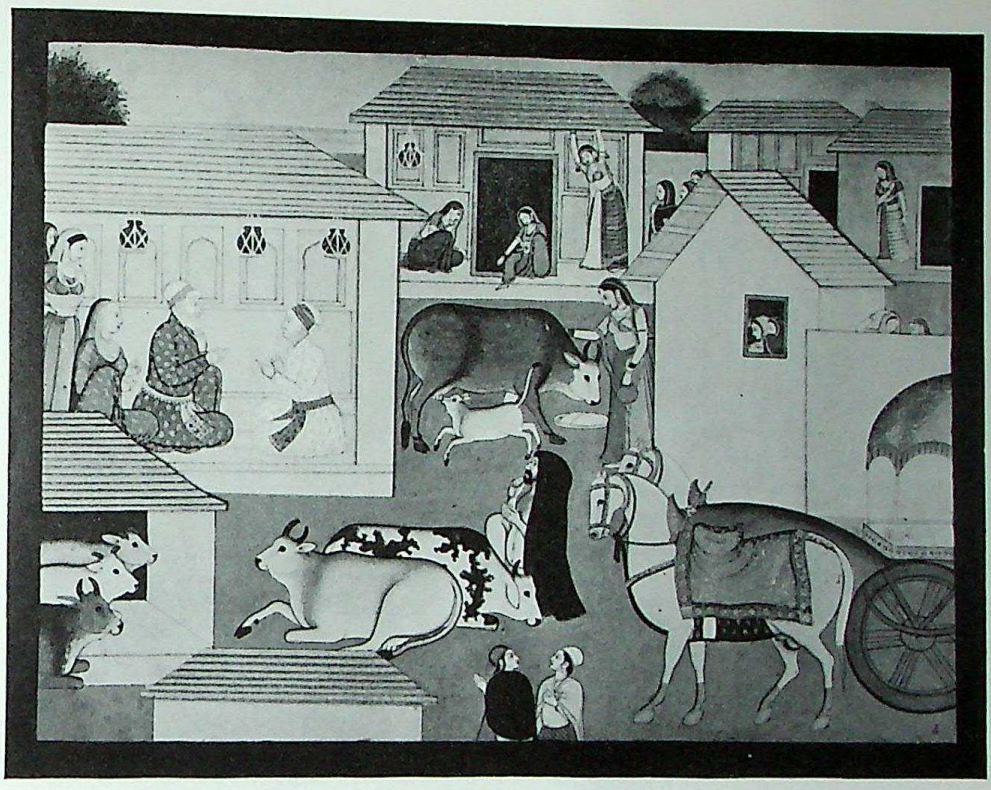

Fig. 178. Uddhava visits Vraja at Krishṇa's bidding, Bhāgavata Purāṇa Series, Guler Style, c. 1760-65, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 179. Uddhava meets the Gopīs in Vraja, Mewar, 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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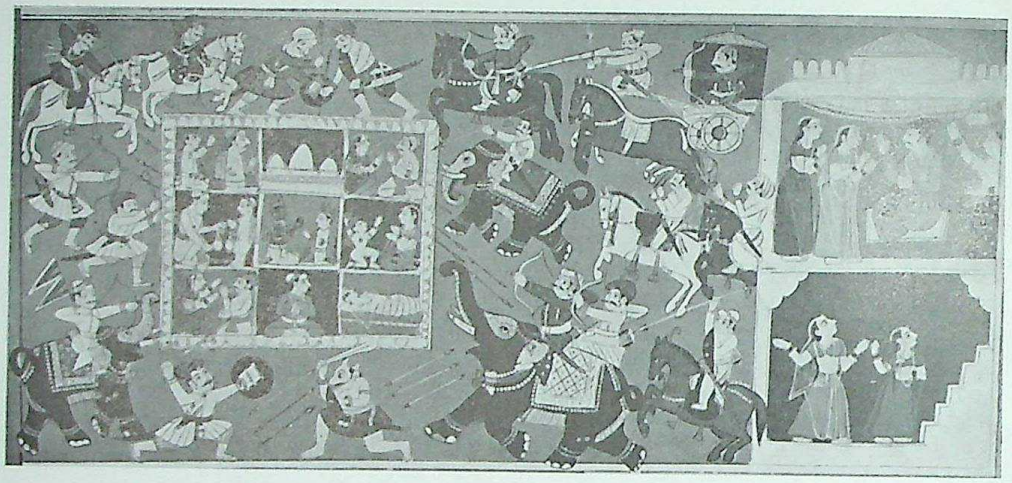

Fig. 180. The siege of Mathura by Jarāsandha and his helpers, Malwa, c. 1700, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

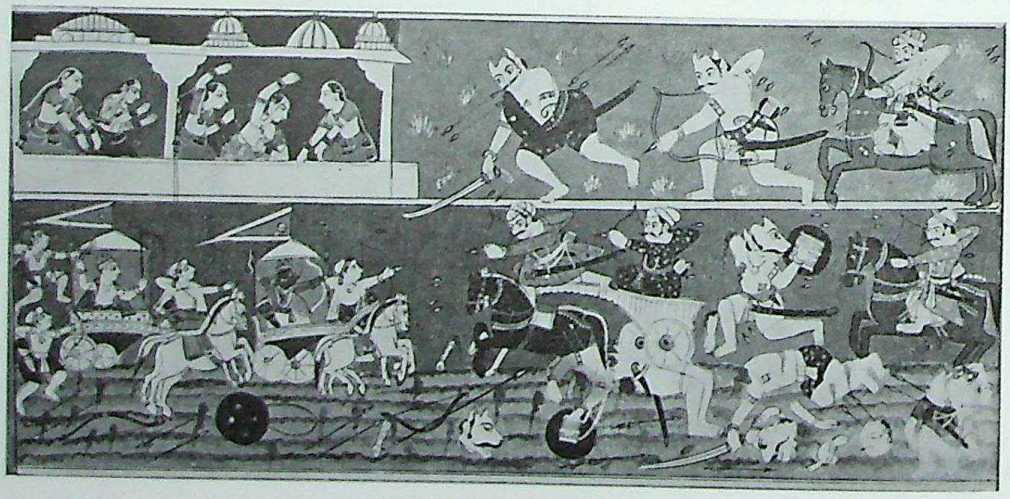

Fig. 181. Krishṇa and Balarāma fighting Jarāsandha's army, when the latter attacked Mathura, Malwa, c. 1700, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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Fig. 182. Krishṇa and Balarāma fight Jarāsandha's army, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, late 16th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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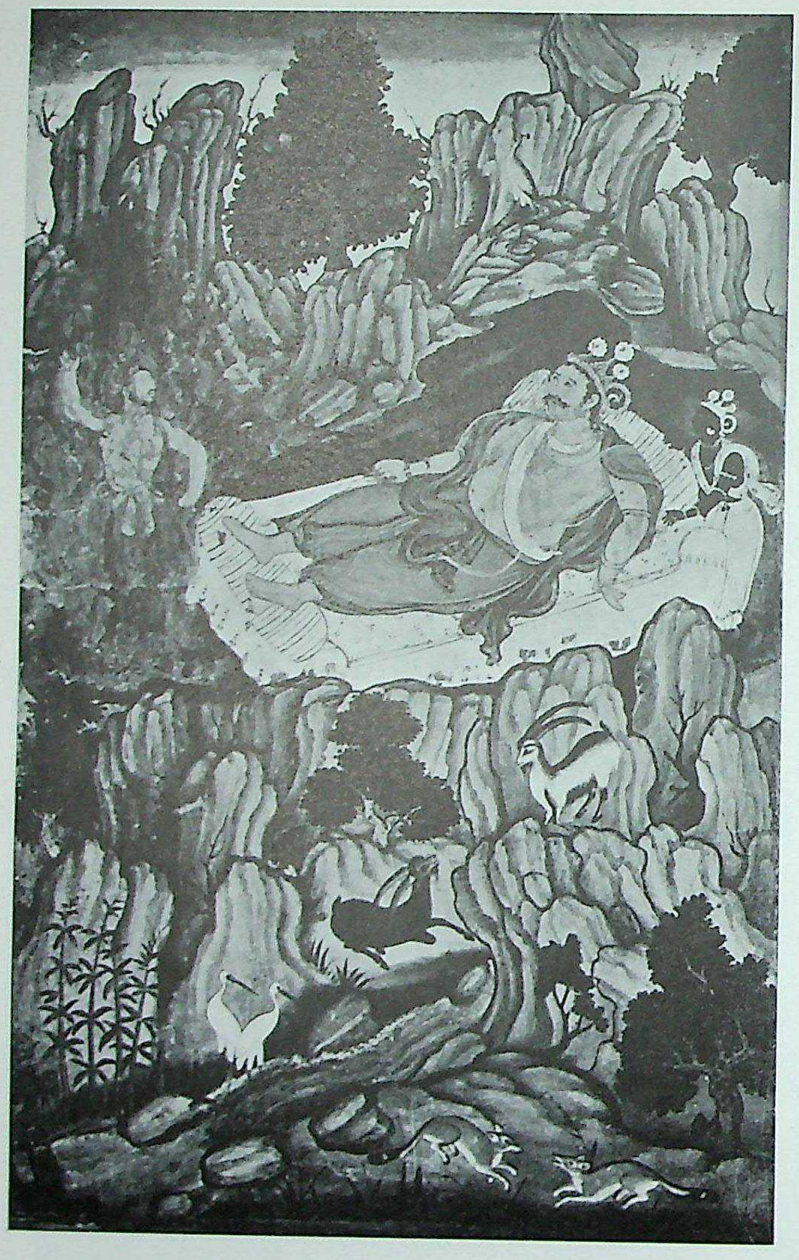

Fig. 183. Muchukunda reduces Kālayavana to ashes, illustration to the Harivaṁśa, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1600, State Museum, Lucknow.

Fig. 184. Muchukunda reduces Kālayavana to ashes, Malwa, 17th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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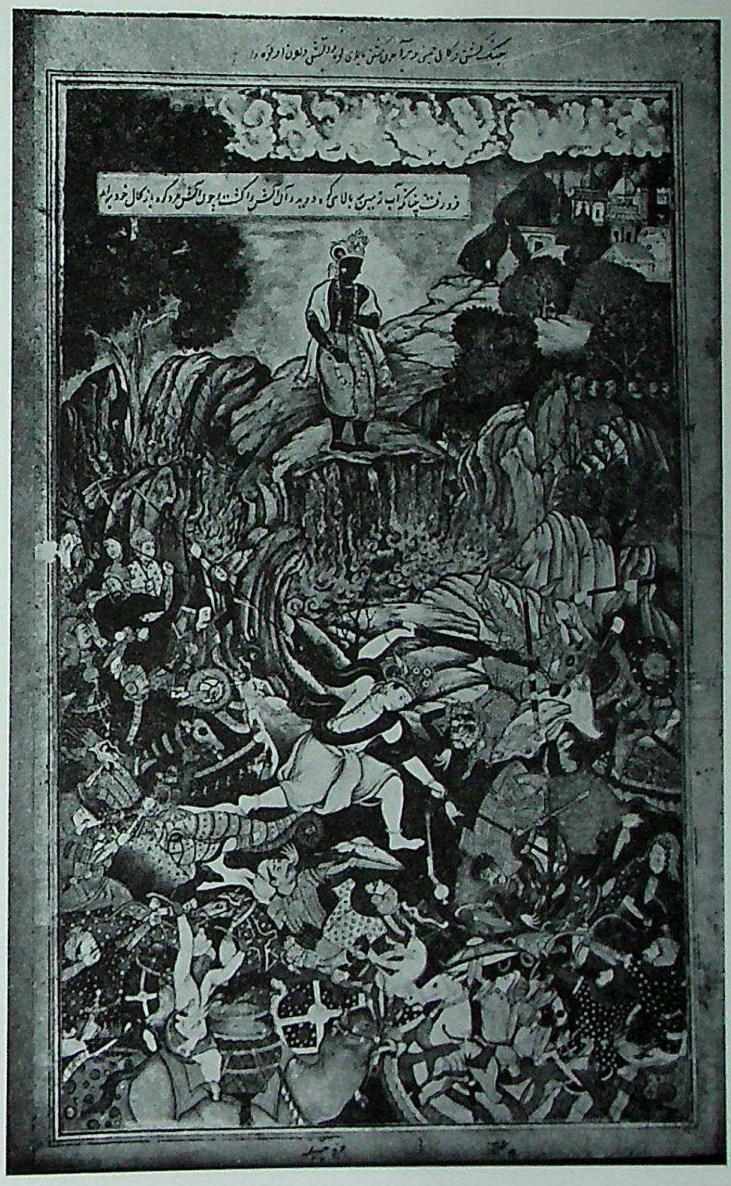

Fig. 185. Krishna and Balarāma fight Jarāsandha's army which set fire to Gomantaka hill, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 183. Muchukunda reduces Kālayavana to ashes, illustration to the Harivaṁśa, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1600, State Museum, Lucknow.

Fig. 184. Muchukunda reduces Kālayavana to ashes, Malwa, 17th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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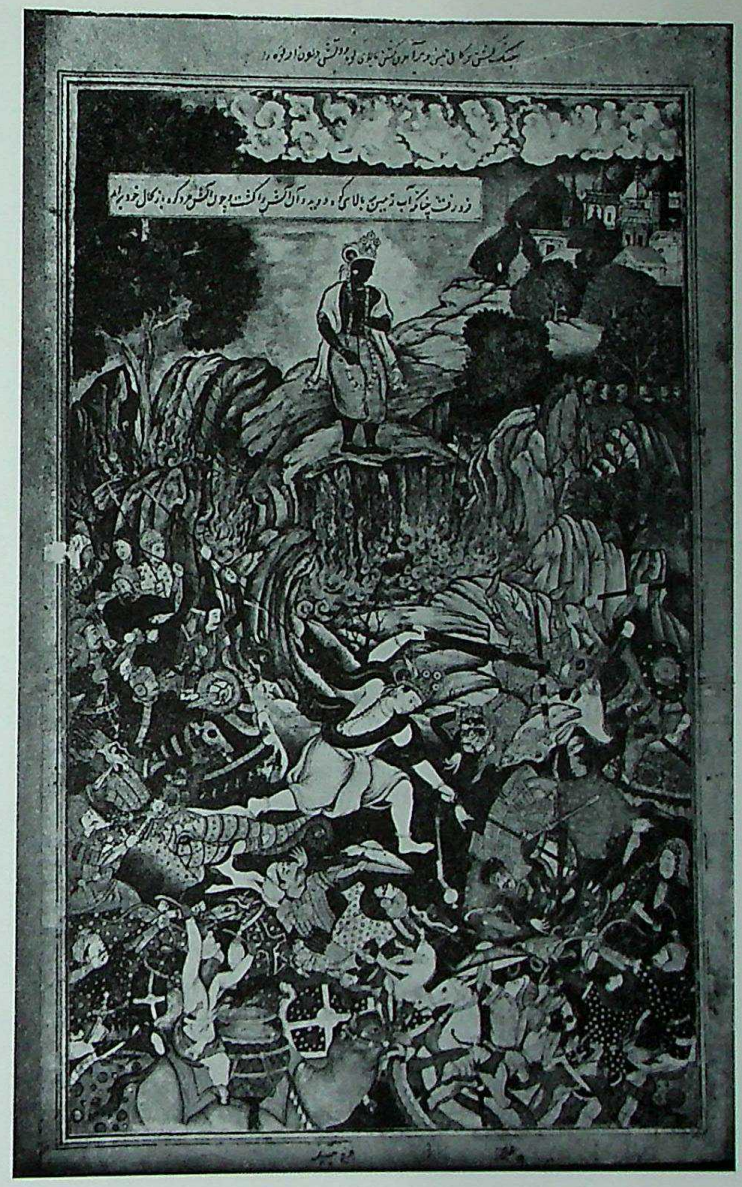

Fig. 185. Krishna and Balarâma fight Jarâsandha's army which set fire to Gomantaka hill, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 186. Krishṇa and Balarāma fight Jarāsandha's army which set fire to the Gomantaka hill, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, late 16th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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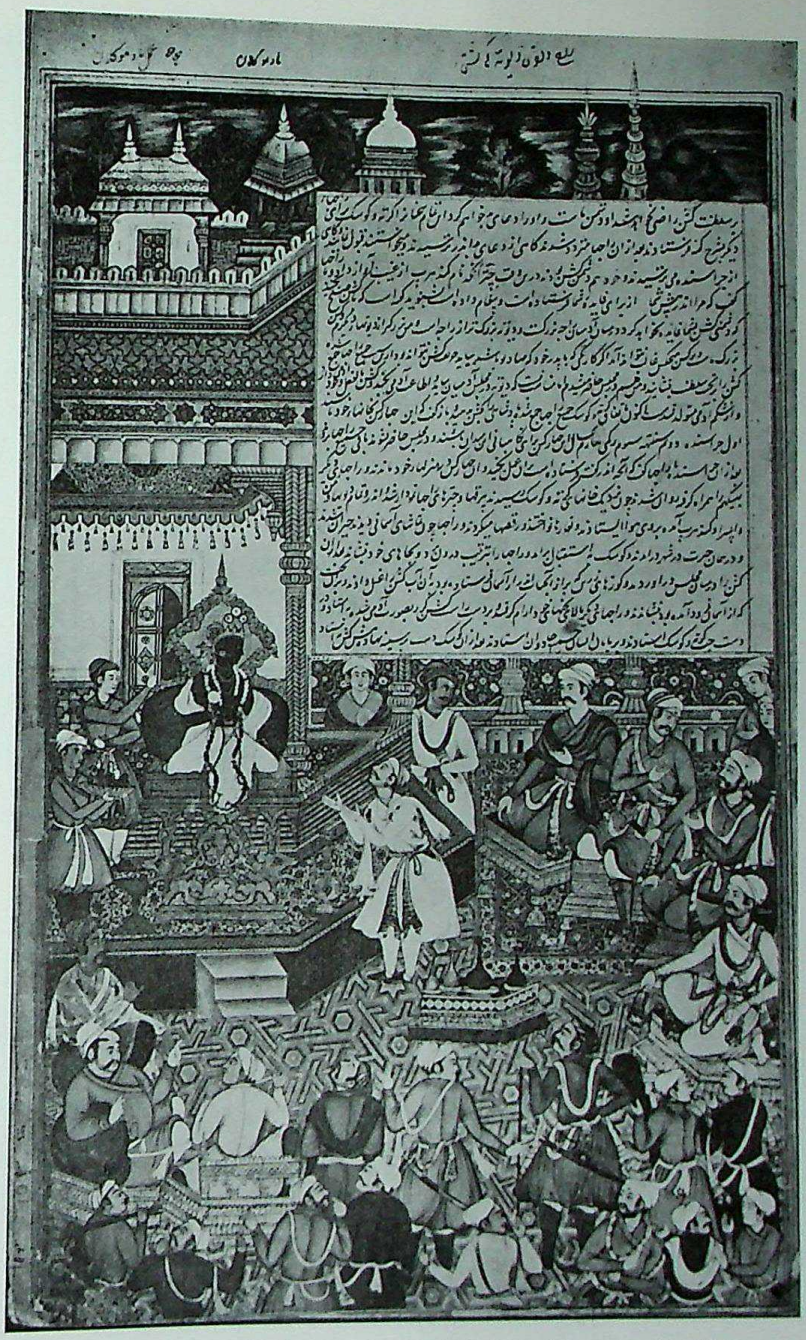

Fig. 187. Krishna raised to the rank of a rājā and enthroned in an assembly of kings, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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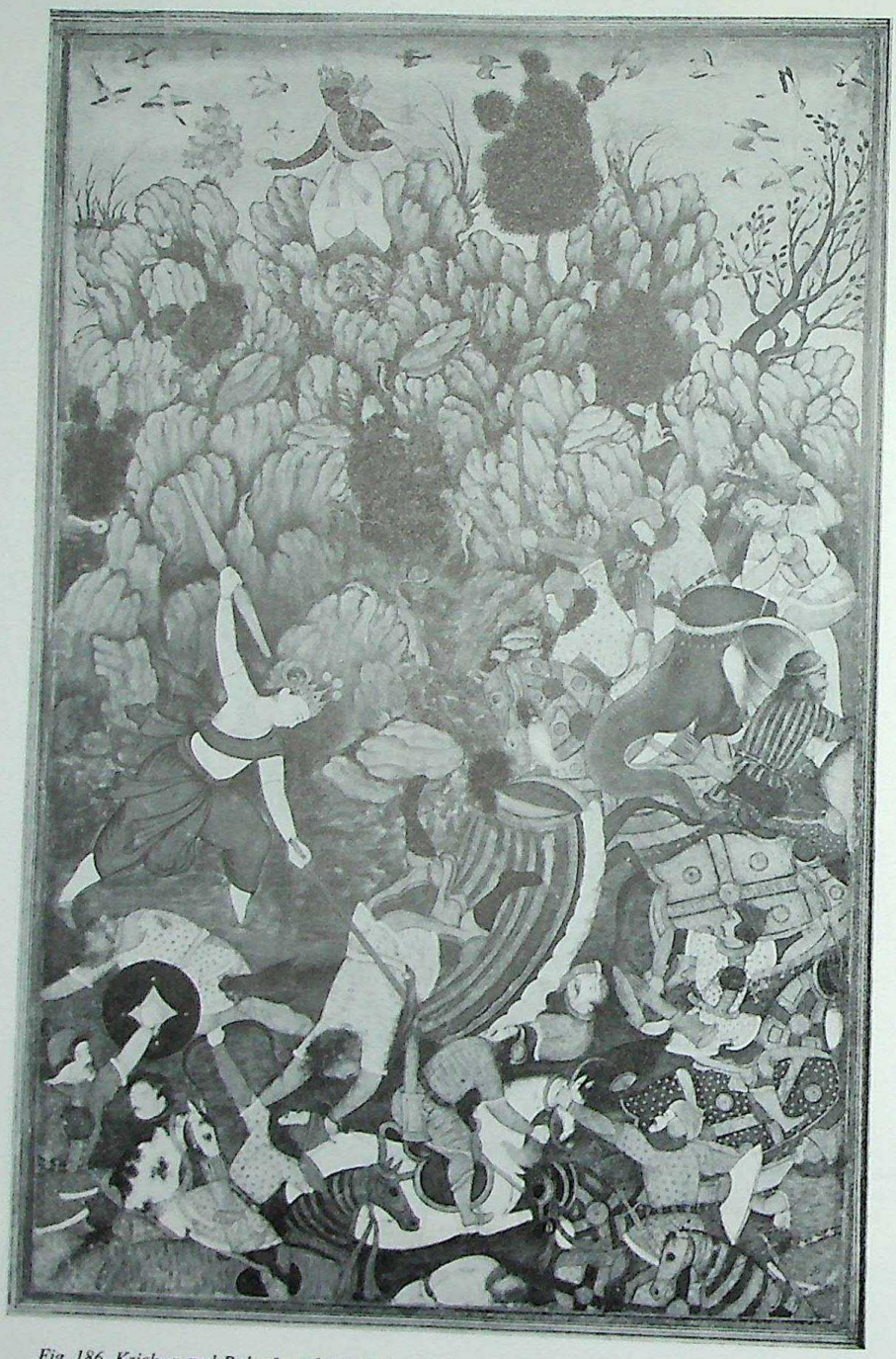

Fig. 186. Krishna and Balarâma fight Jarâsandha's army which set fire to the Gomantaka hill, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, late 16th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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Fig. 187. Krishna raised to the rank of a rājā and enthroned in an assembly of kings, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 188. Krishṇa being received by Rājā Bhīshmaka, illustration to the Harivaṁśa, Mughal, c. 1590, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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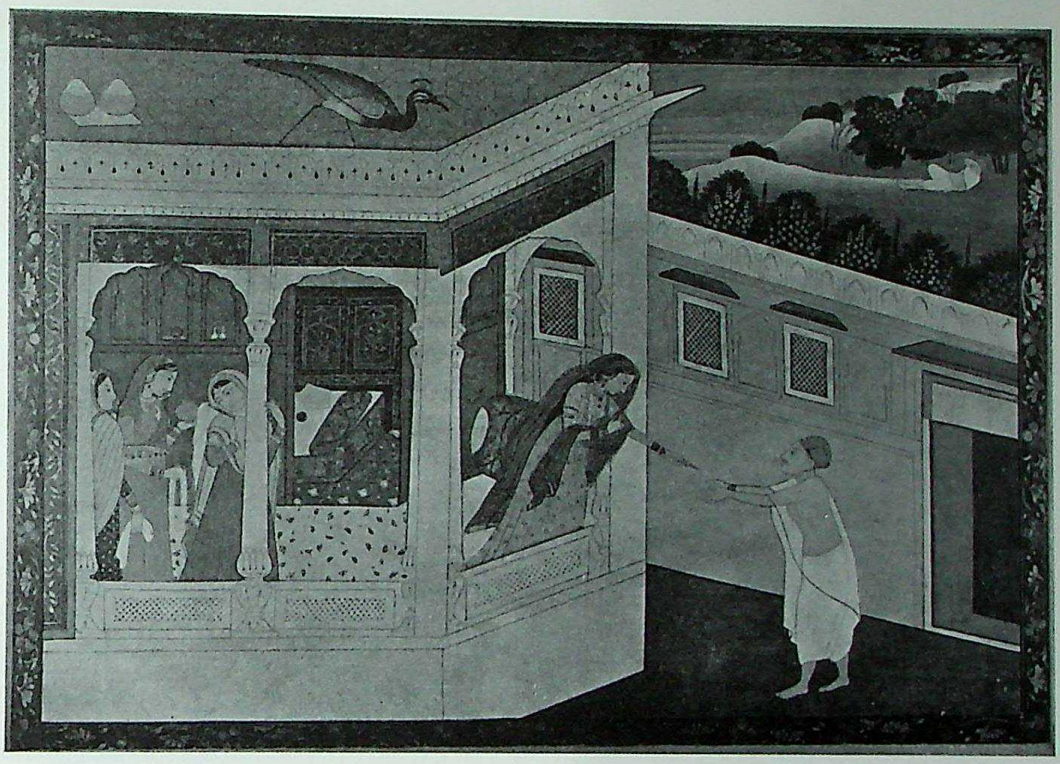

Fig. 189. Rukmiṇī sending message to Krishṇa through a Brāhmaṇa, Kangra Style, c. 1800, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 190. Krishṇa carrying away Rukmiṇī, Pahari, c. 1790, British Museum, London.

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Fig. 191. Krishṇa fighting Rukmī (brother of Rukmiṇī), Kangra Style, c. 1800, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

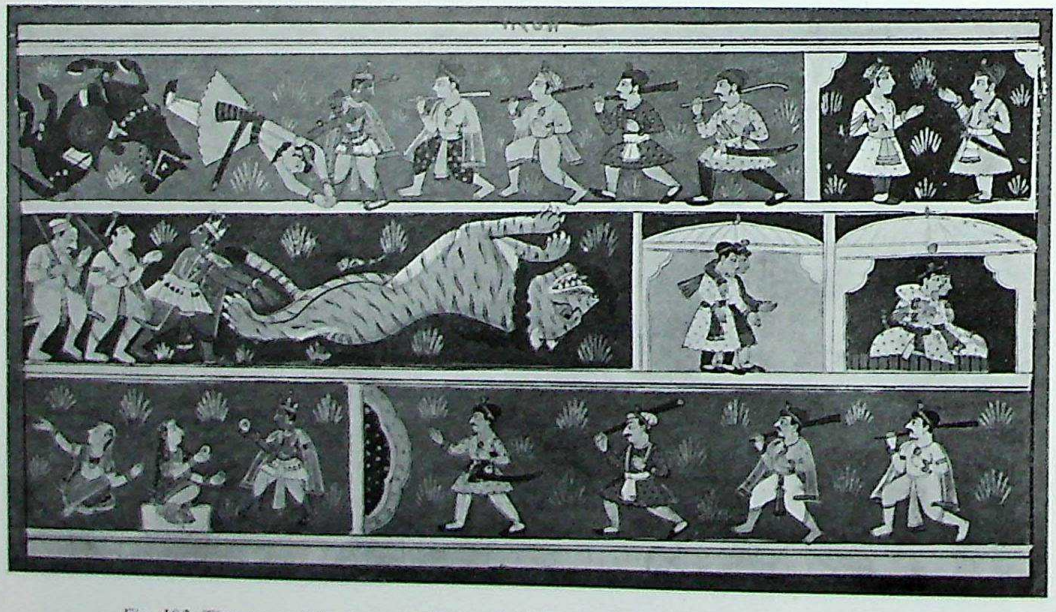

Fig. 192. The story of the Syamantaka jewel, Malwa, c. 1700, National Museum, New Delhi.

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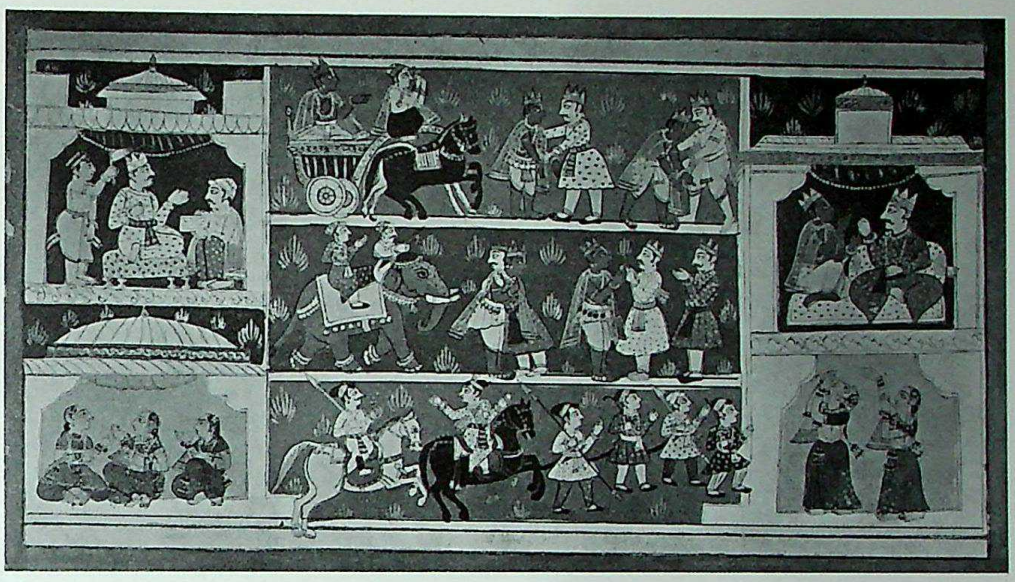

Fig. 193. Krishṇa's reception at Dvārakā after the recovery of the Syamantaka jewel (?), Malwa, c. 1700 A.D., National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 194. Jāmbavân offers his daughter to Krishna, Pahari, late 18th century, Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

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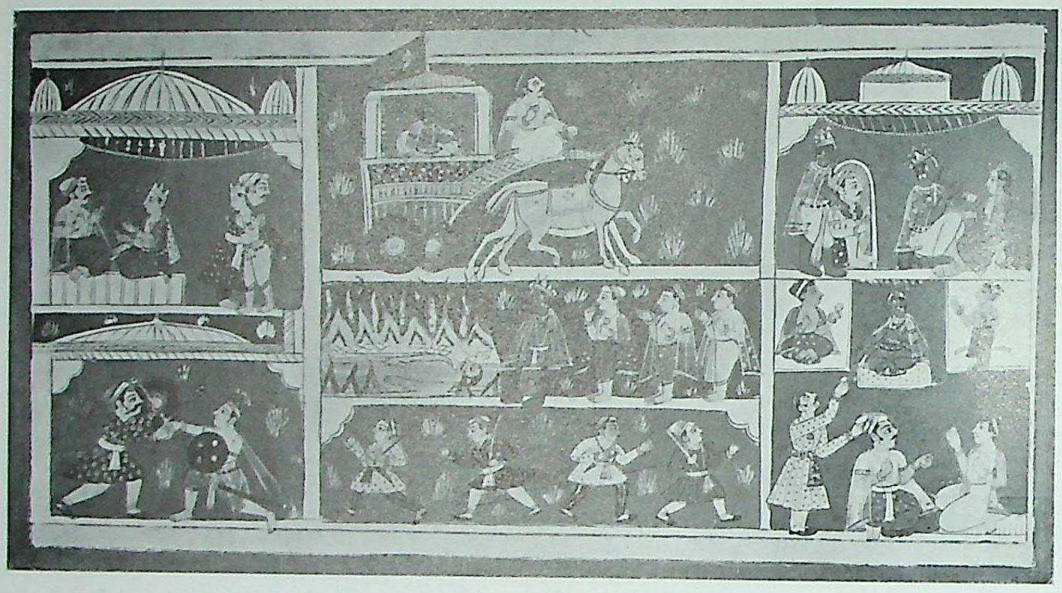

Fig. 195. Death of Satrājit, Malwa, late 17th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

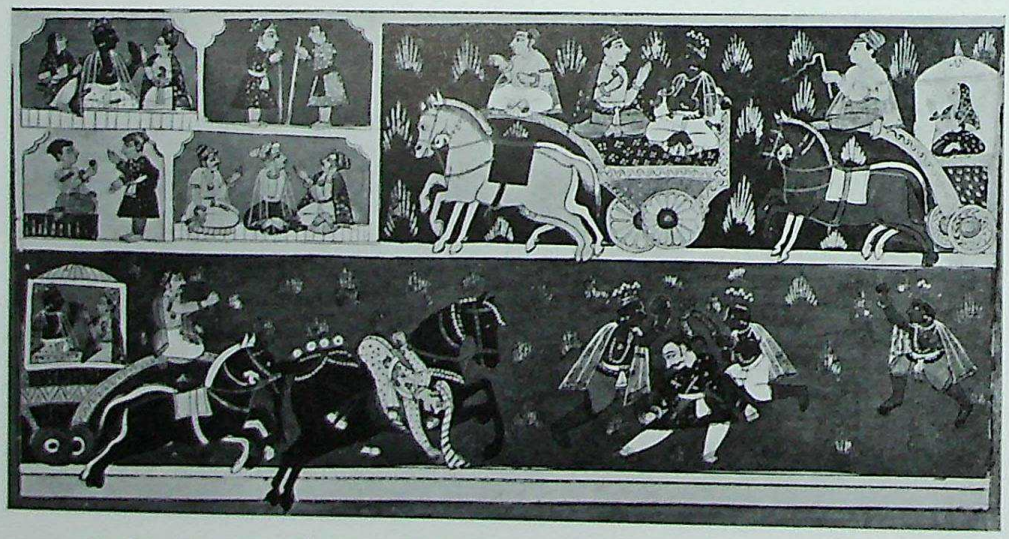

Fig. 196. Krishṇa killing Śatadhanvā, Malwa, late 17th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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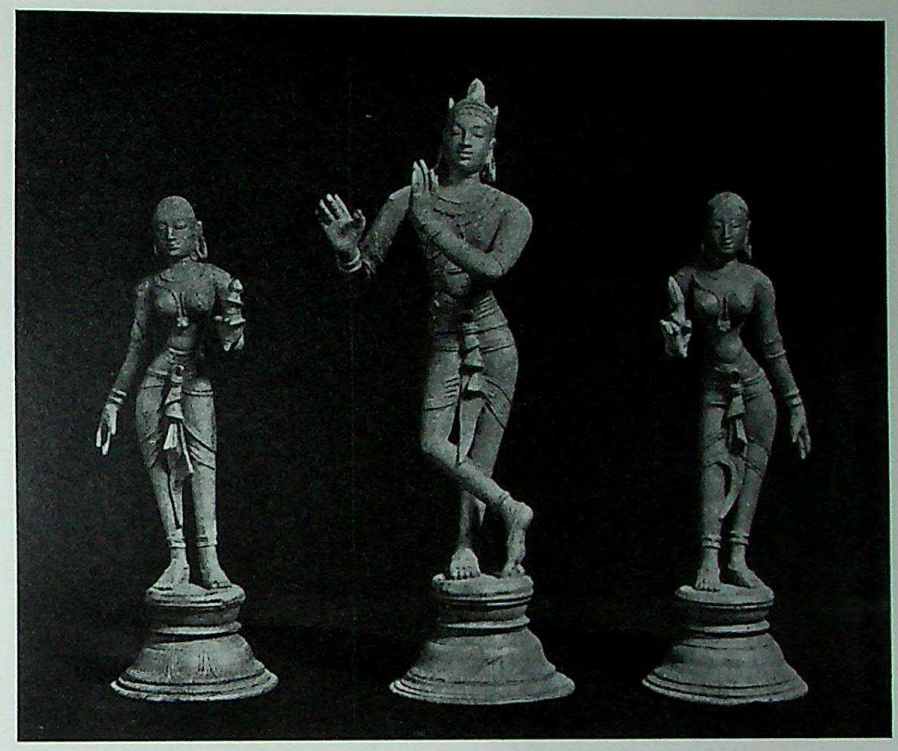

Fig. 197. Krishṇa with Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, bronze, Chimakurti, Guntur District, c. 10th-11th century, Madras Government Museum, Madras, Tamil Nadu.

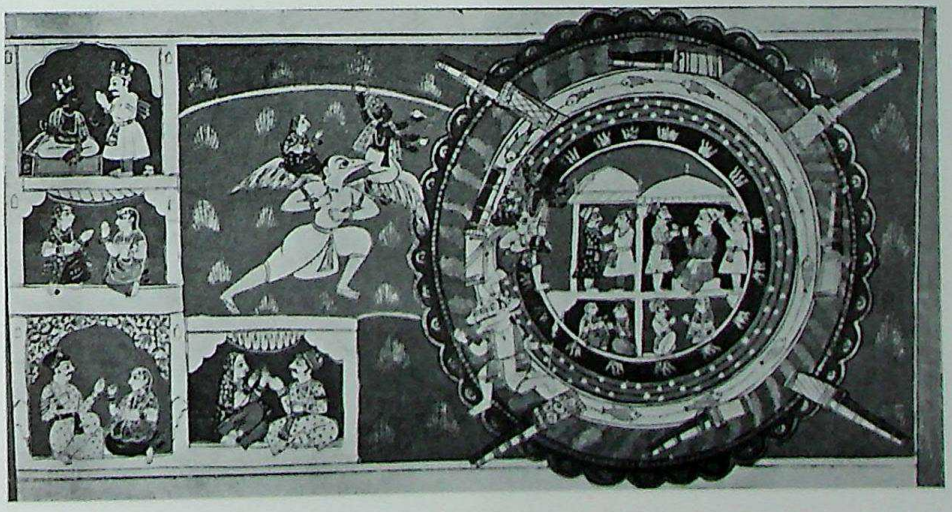

Fig. 198. Krishṇa attacking Naraka's city, Malwa, late 17th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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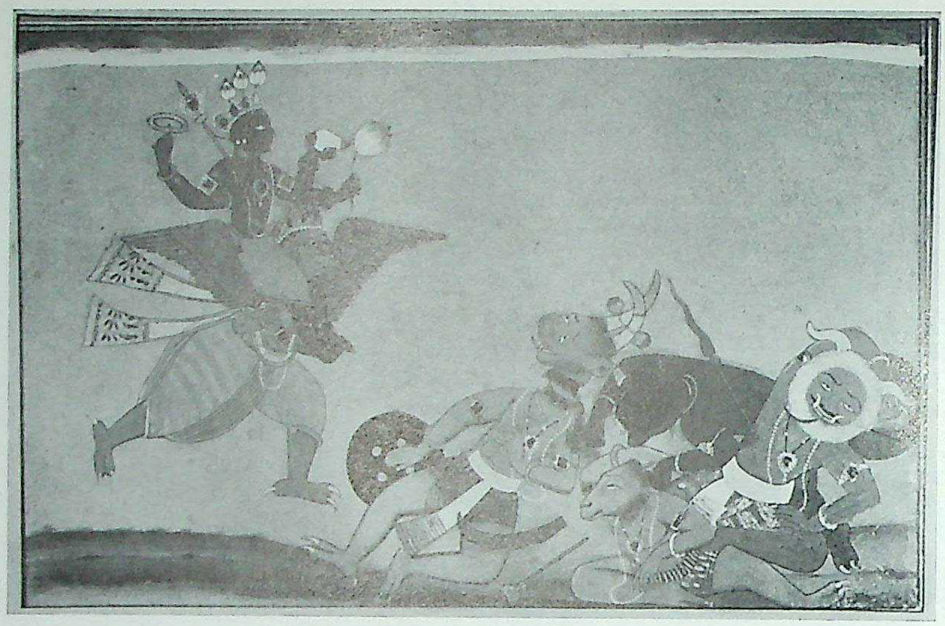

Fig. 199. Krishṇa attacking Naraka's army, Basohli, c. 1730, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 200. Krishna accompanied by Satyabhāmā brings back the Maṇi Parvata, 11th century, Angkor Wat (after plate, 120, Art and Civilisation by B. Groslier).

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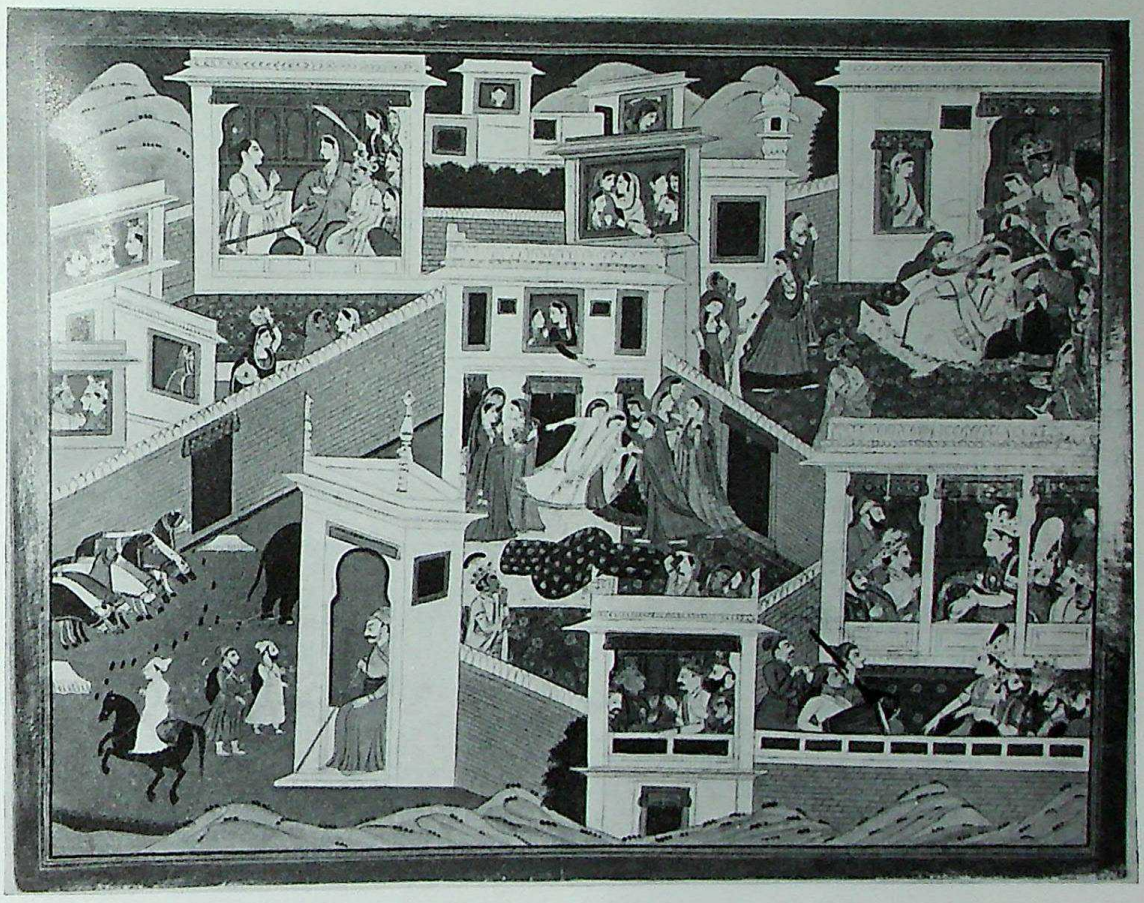

Fig. 201. Krishṇa consoling Satyabhāmā, Pārijāta-haraṇa-episode, detail, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 202. Krishṇa's combat with Indra for the Pārijāta tree, illustration to the Harivaṁśa, Mughal, c. 1590, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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Fig. 203. Krishṇa fights Indra, carries away Pārijāta tree and plants it in Satyabhāmā's court, Bādāmi, c. 600.

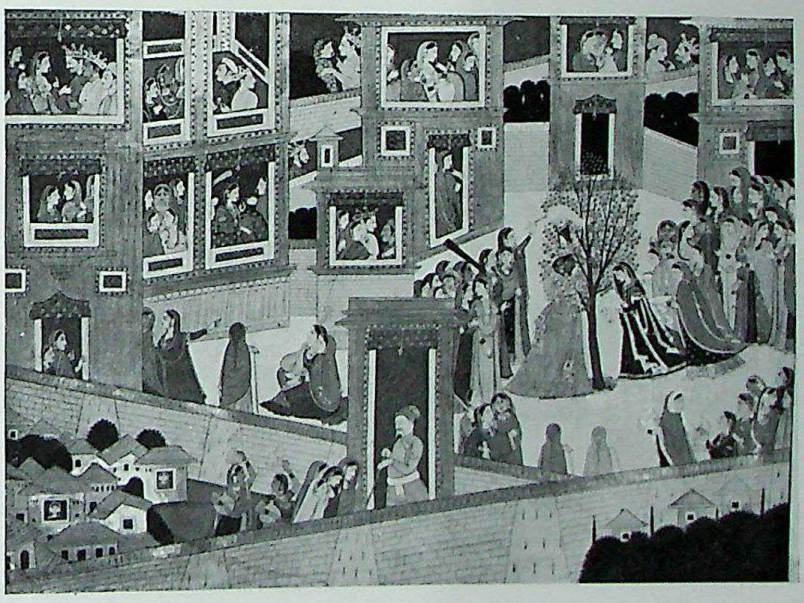

Fig. 204. Krishṇa planting the Pārijāta tree in Satyabhāmā's court, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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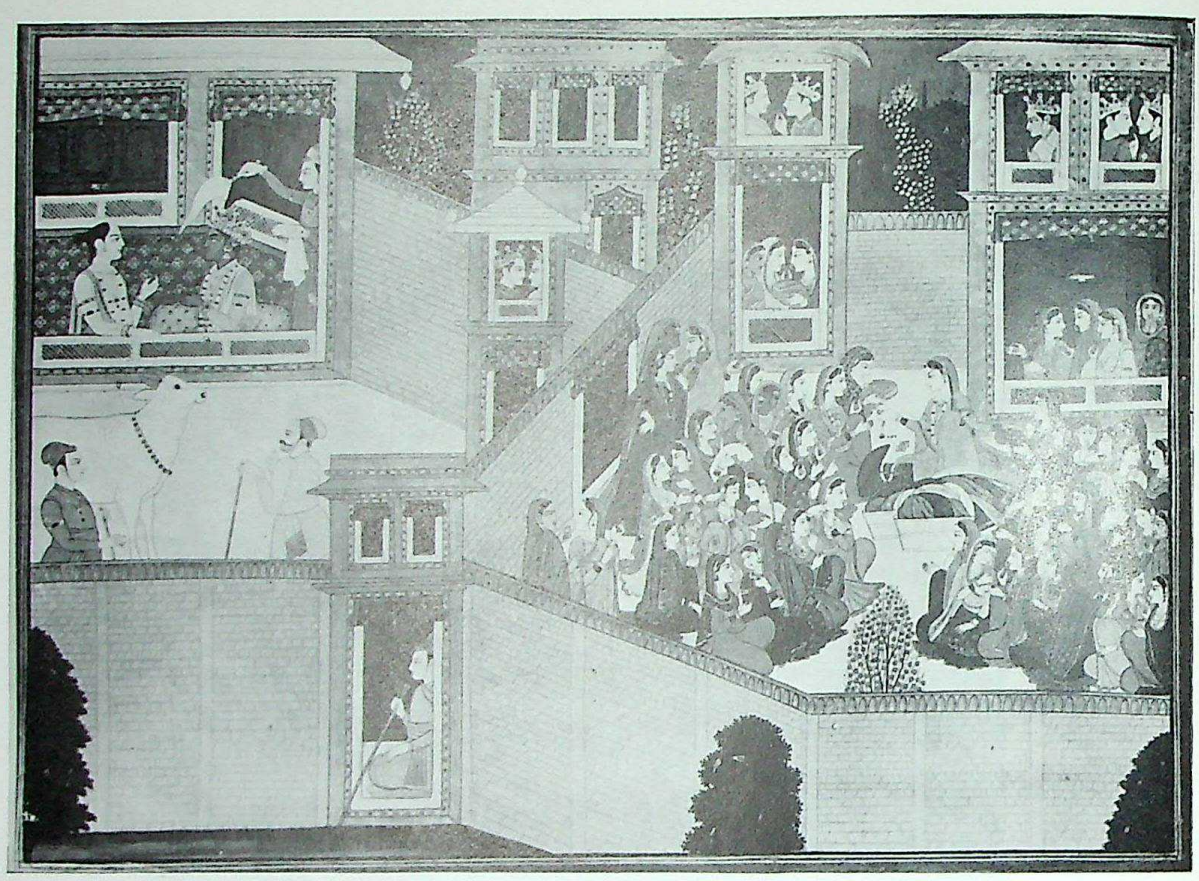

Fig. 205. The Yādava ladies watching the celebration of the installation of the Pārijāta tree, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

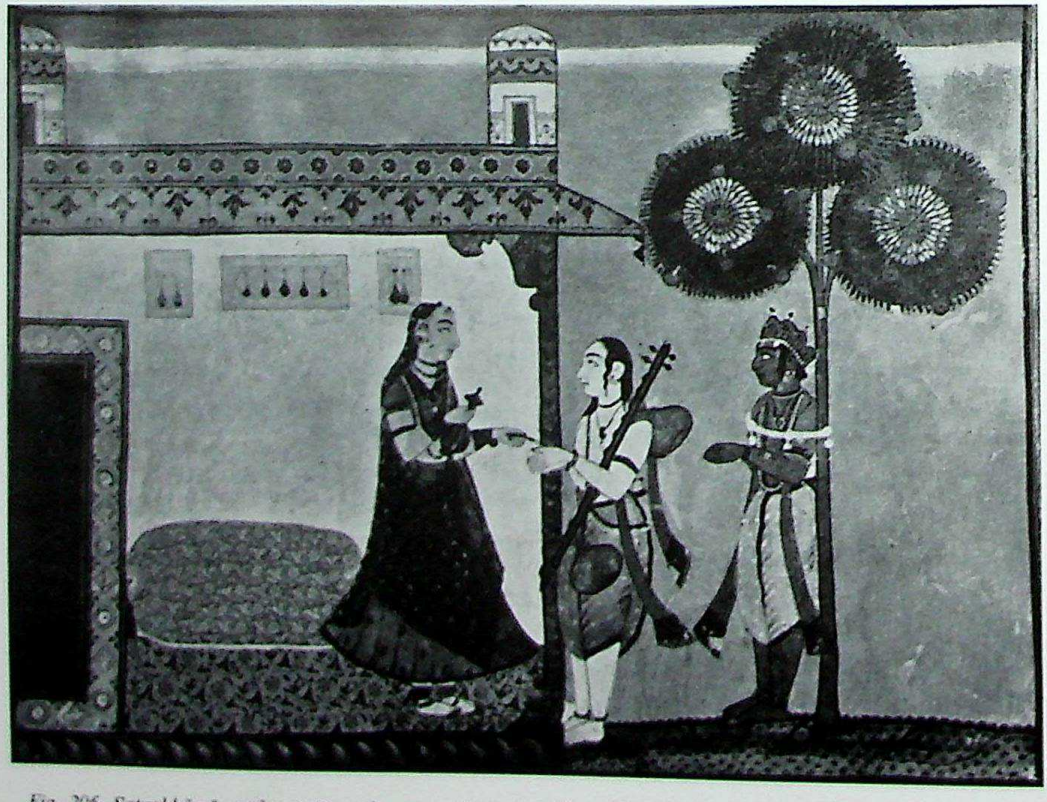

Fig. 206. Satyabhāmā performs Punyaka vrata (a vow), offering Krishna as a gift to Nārada, Pahari, c. 1730, Punjab Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

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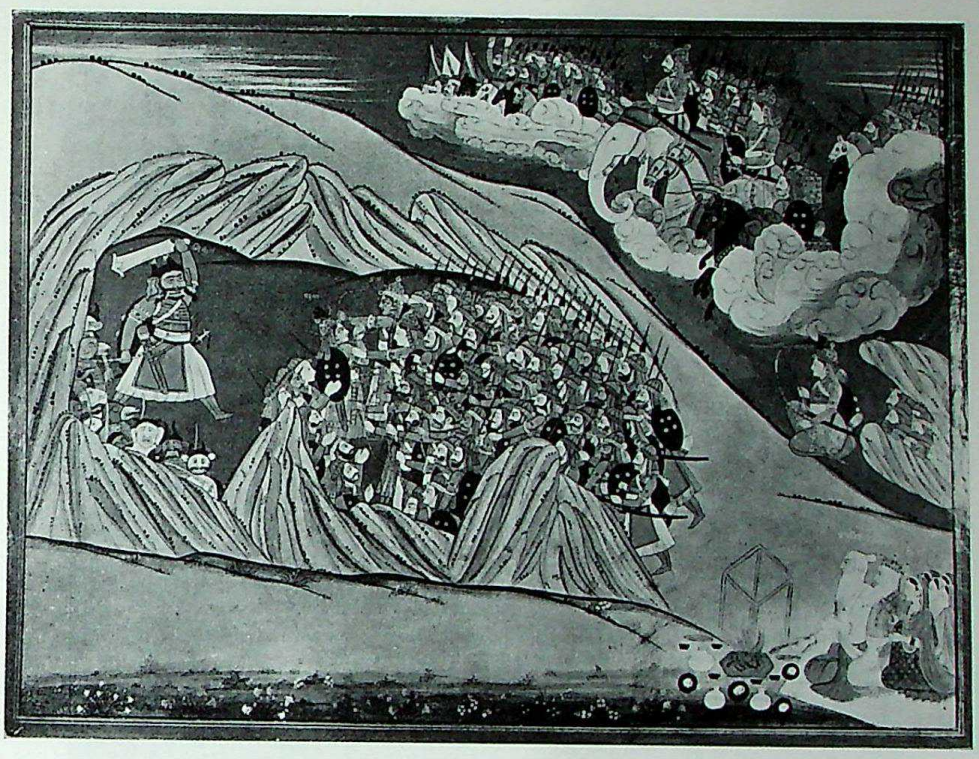

Fig. 207. Pradyumna fights Nikumbha, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

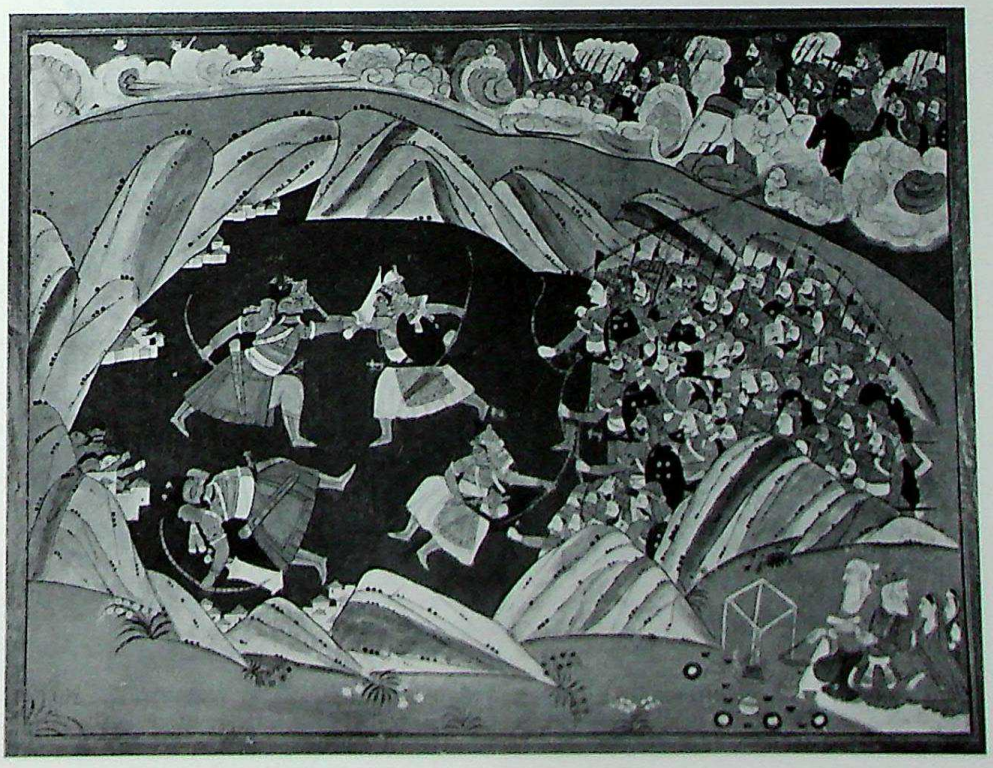

Fig. 208. Krishna fights Nikumbha, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 209. Krishṇa kills Nikumbha, illustration to the Harivaṁśa, Mughal, c. 1590, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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Fig. 210. Krishṇa kills Nikumbha, illustration to the Harivaṁśa, Mughal, late 16th century, State Museum, Lucknow.

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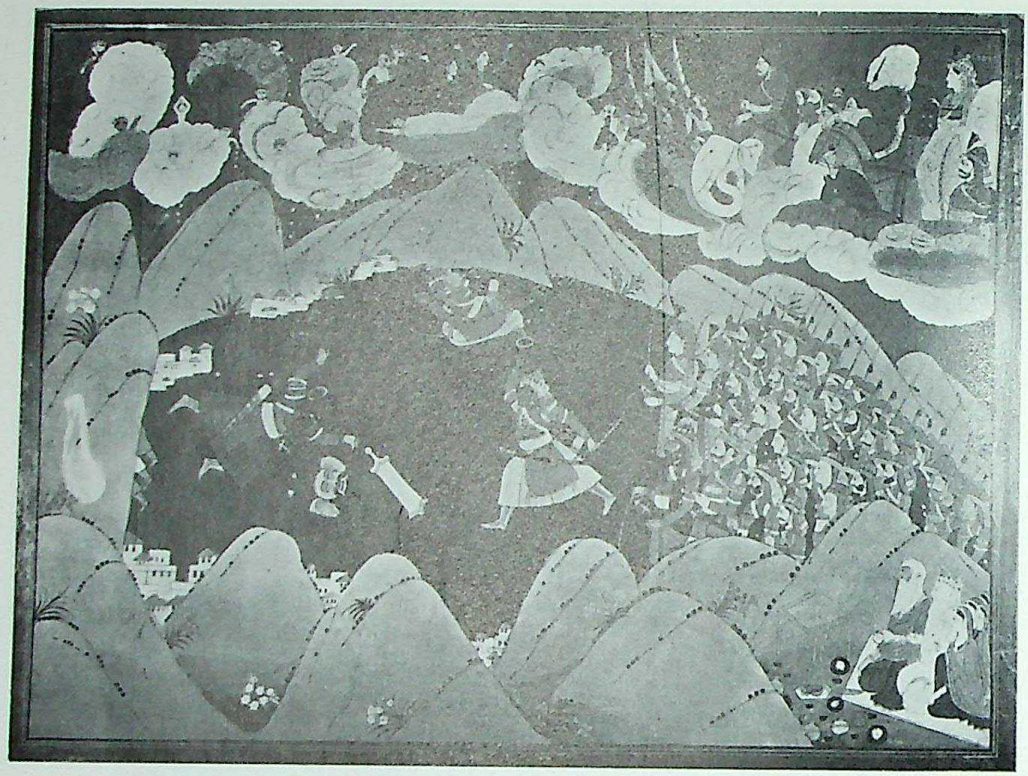

Fig. 211. Krishṇa kills Nikumbha, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

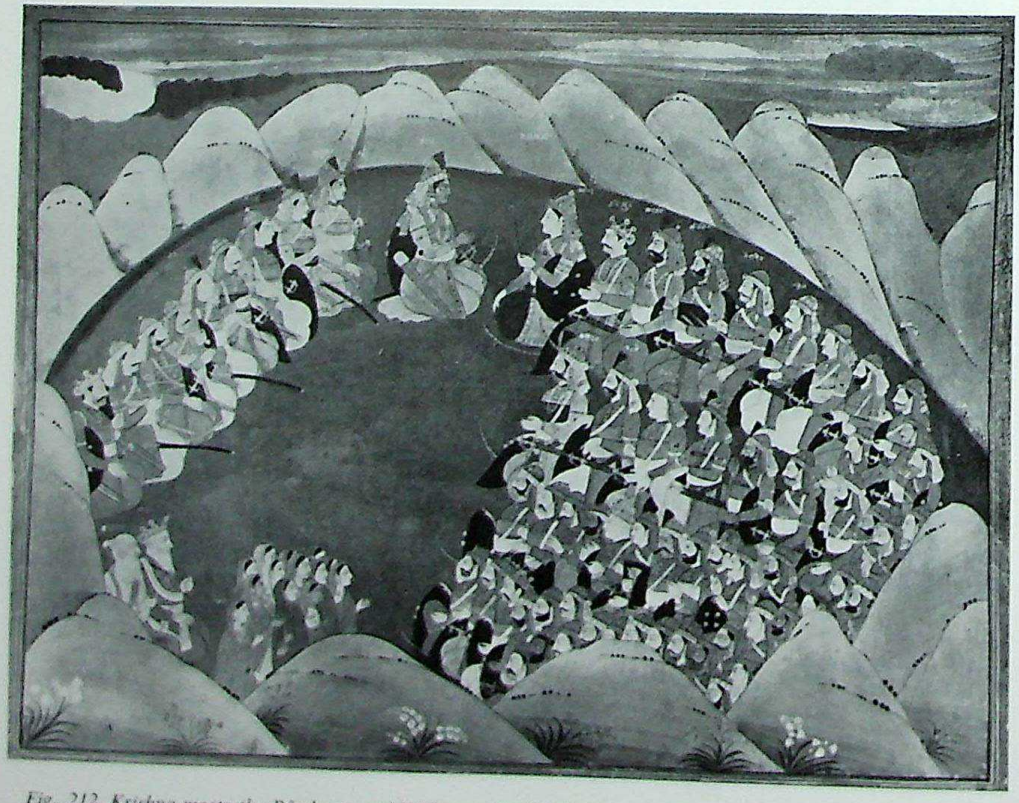

Fig. 212. Krishṇa meets the Pāṇḍavas and Yādavas after his victory over Nikumbha, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

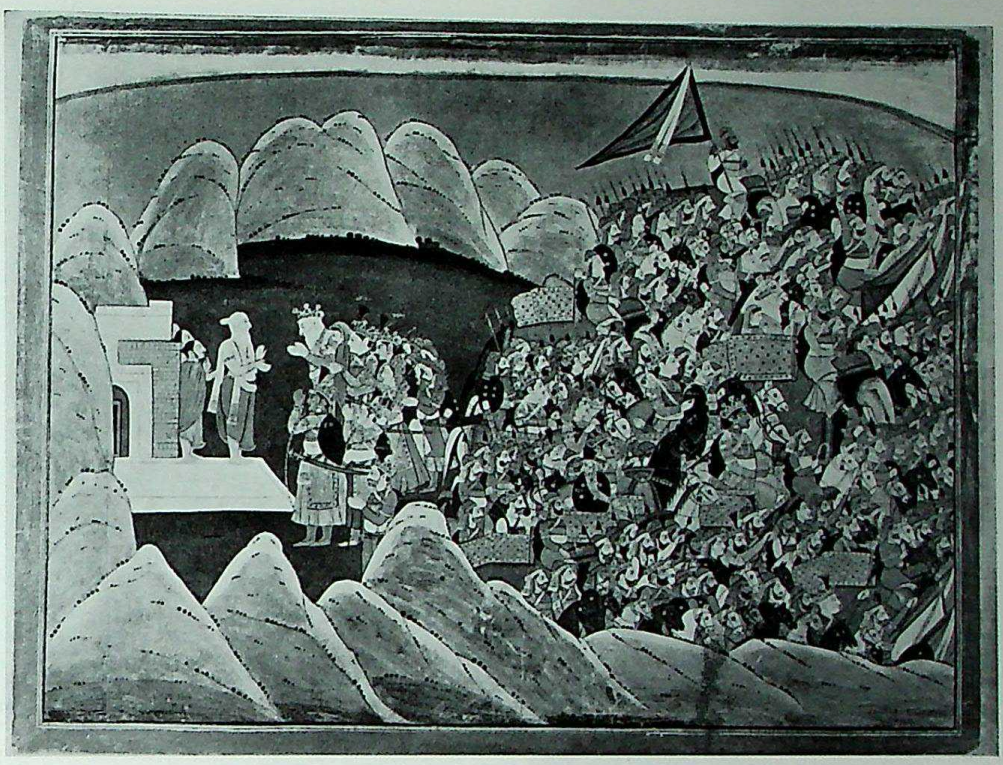

Fig. 213. Krishṇa, Vasudeva, Devakī and others take leave of Brahmadatta, after the killing of Nikumbha at Shaṭpura, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

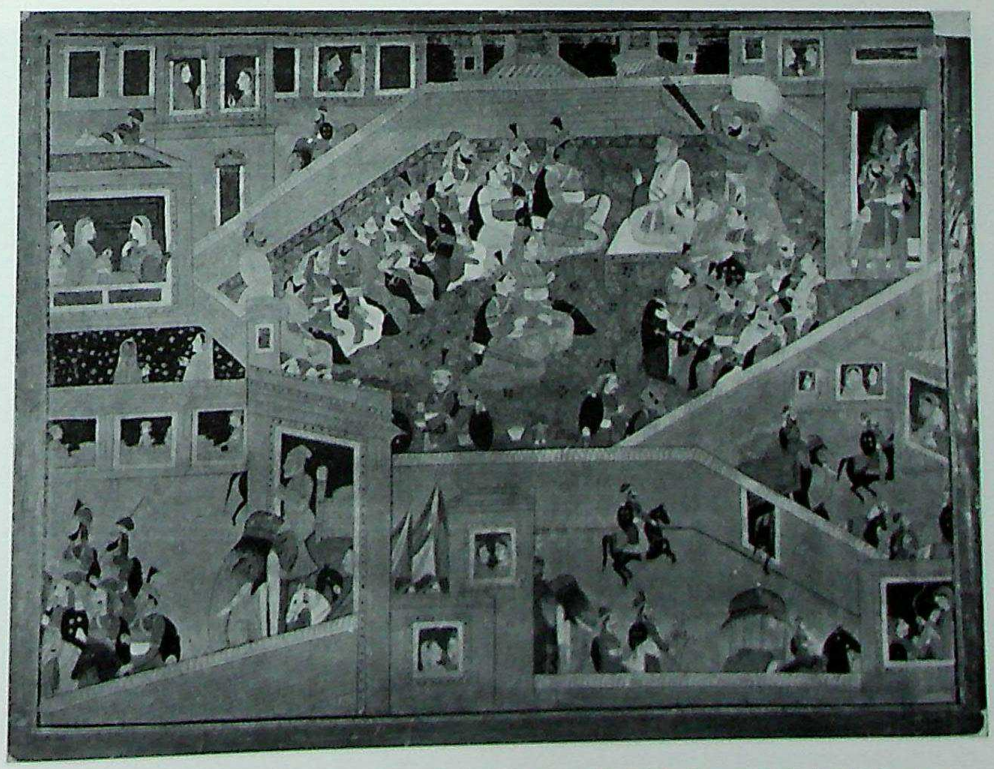

Fig. 214. Krishṇa's reception at Dvārakā after his victory over Nikumbha, Kangra Style, late 18th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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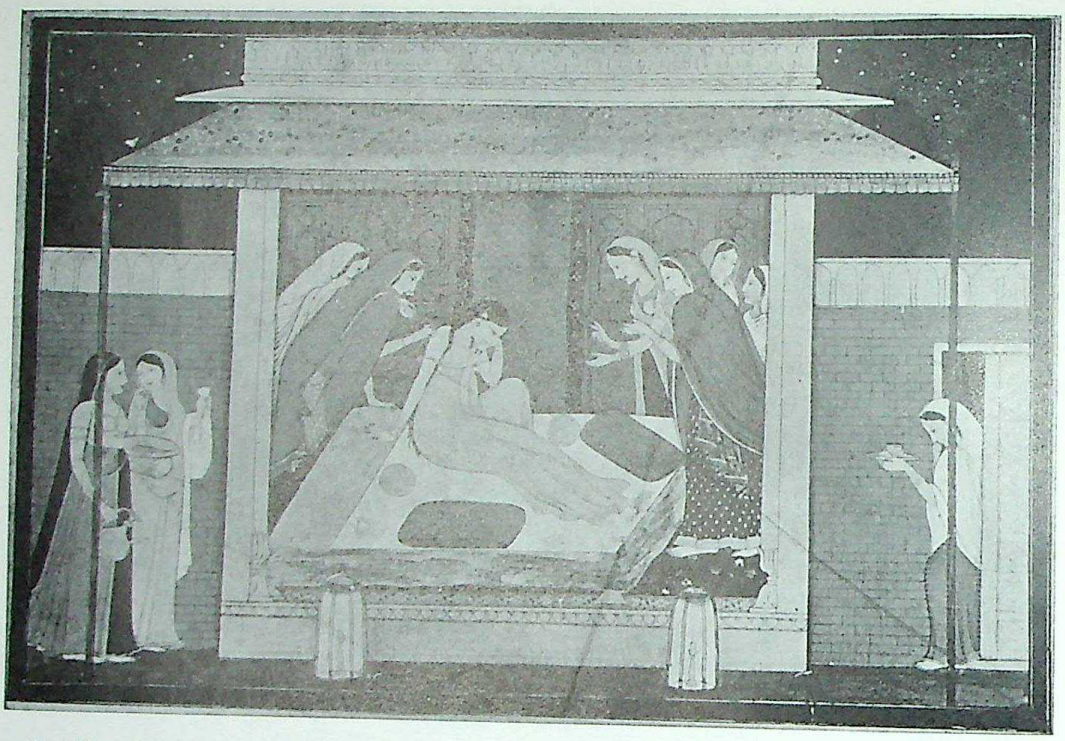

Fig. 215. Ushā waking from her dream, surrounded by her maidens, early Kangra Style in Chamba, c. 1770-1775, artist, probably Ram Sahai, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

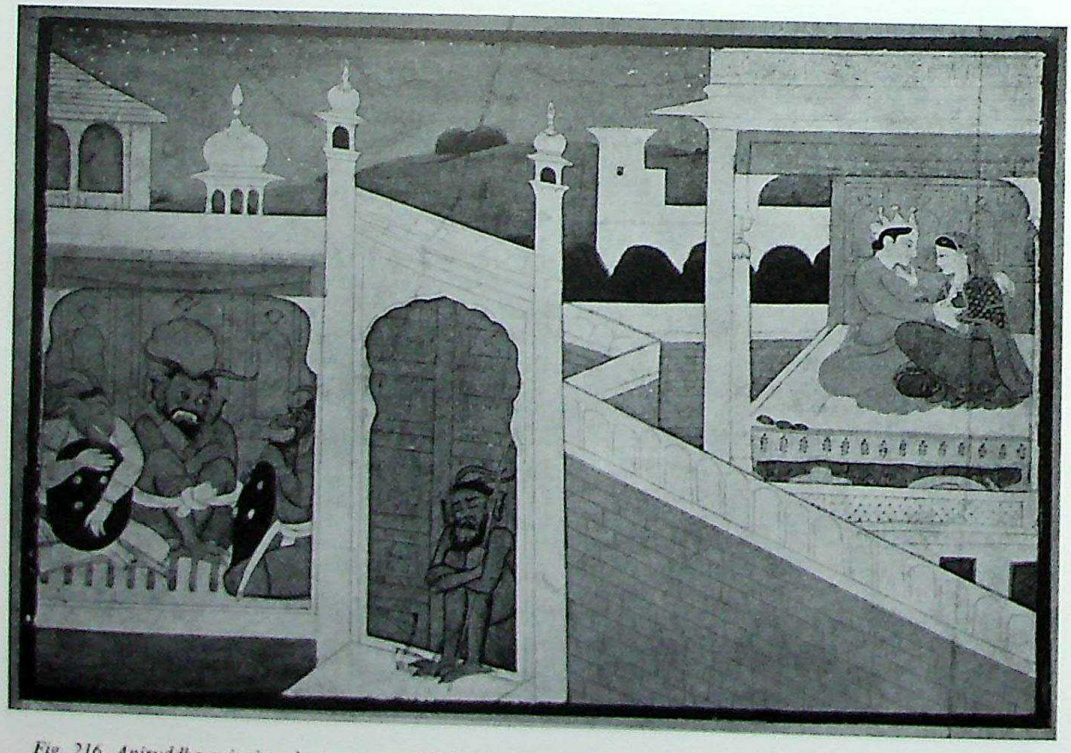

Fig. 216. Aniruddha enjoying the company of Ushā after he was brought over by Chitralekhā to Śoṇitapura, early Kangra Style in Chamba, c. 1770-1775, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

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Fig. 217. Aniruddha fights Bāṇāsura's army, early Kangra Style in Chamba, c. 1770-1775, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

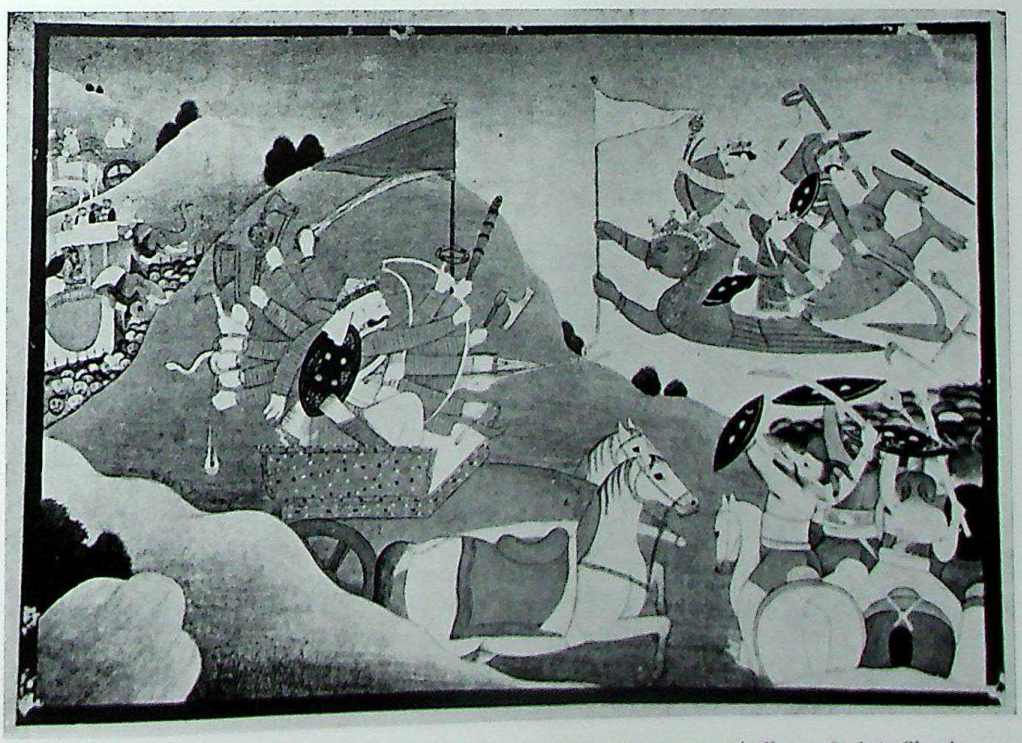

Fig. 218. Fight of Krishṇa, Balarāma and Pradyumna with Bāṇāsura's army, early Kangra Style in Chamba, c. 1770-1775, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

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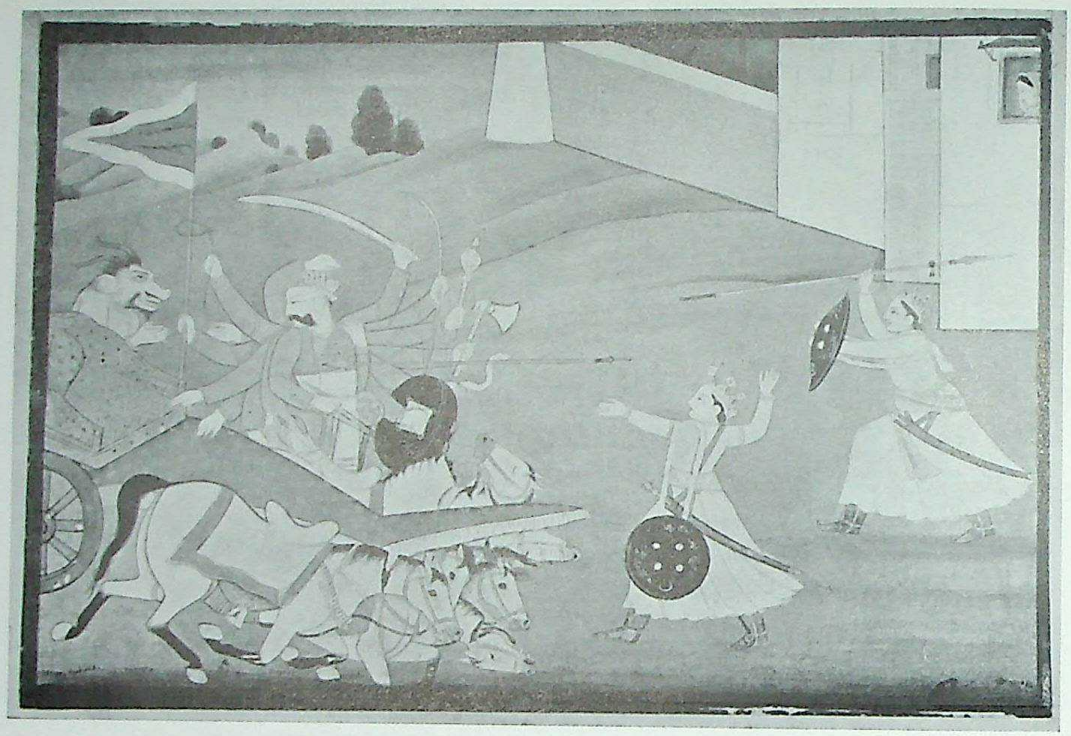

Fig. 219. Krishṇa fights Bāṇāsura, early Kangra Style in Chamba, c. 1770-1775, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

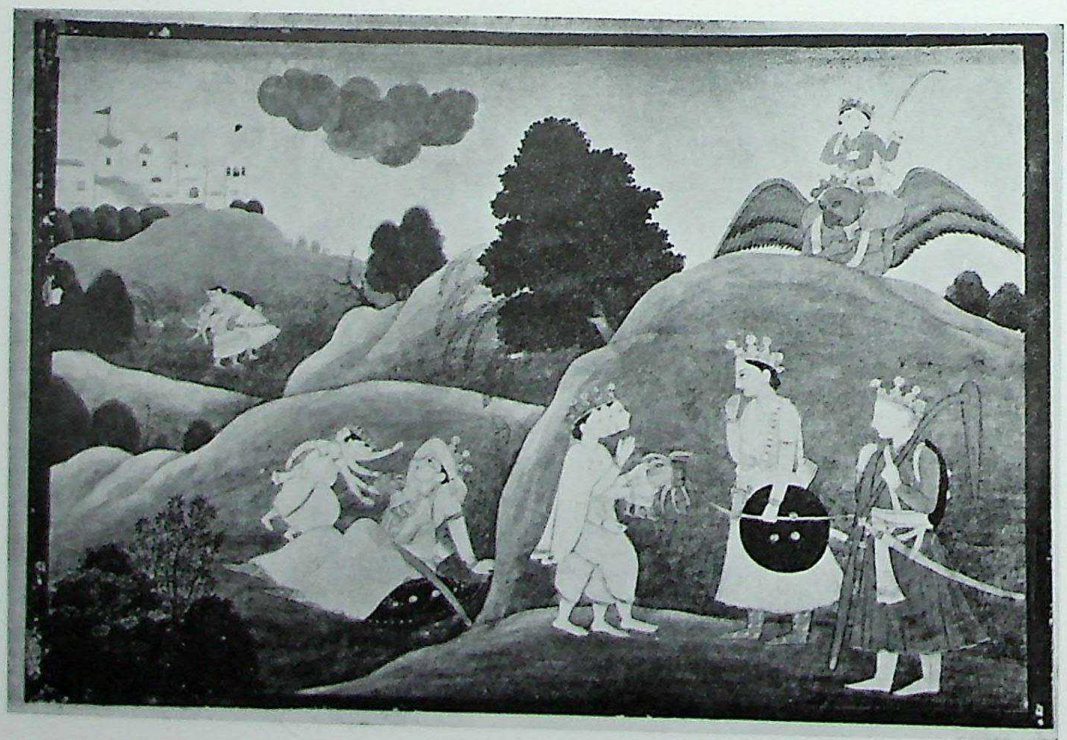

Fig. 220. Three-headed Jvara fights Krishna (Krishna created another three-headed Jvara which killed the previous one), early Kangra Style in Chamba, c. 1770-1775, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

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Fig. 221. Ushā-Aniruddha story, Gaṇeśa takes part in the fight between Krishṇa and Bāṇāsura (?), illustration to the Razm Nama, c. 1600, Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda.

Fig. 222. Krishṇa fights Koṭavī-devī and Bāṇāsura, early Kangra Style in Chamba, c. 1770-1775, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

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Fig. 223. Krishṇa fights Bāṇāsura, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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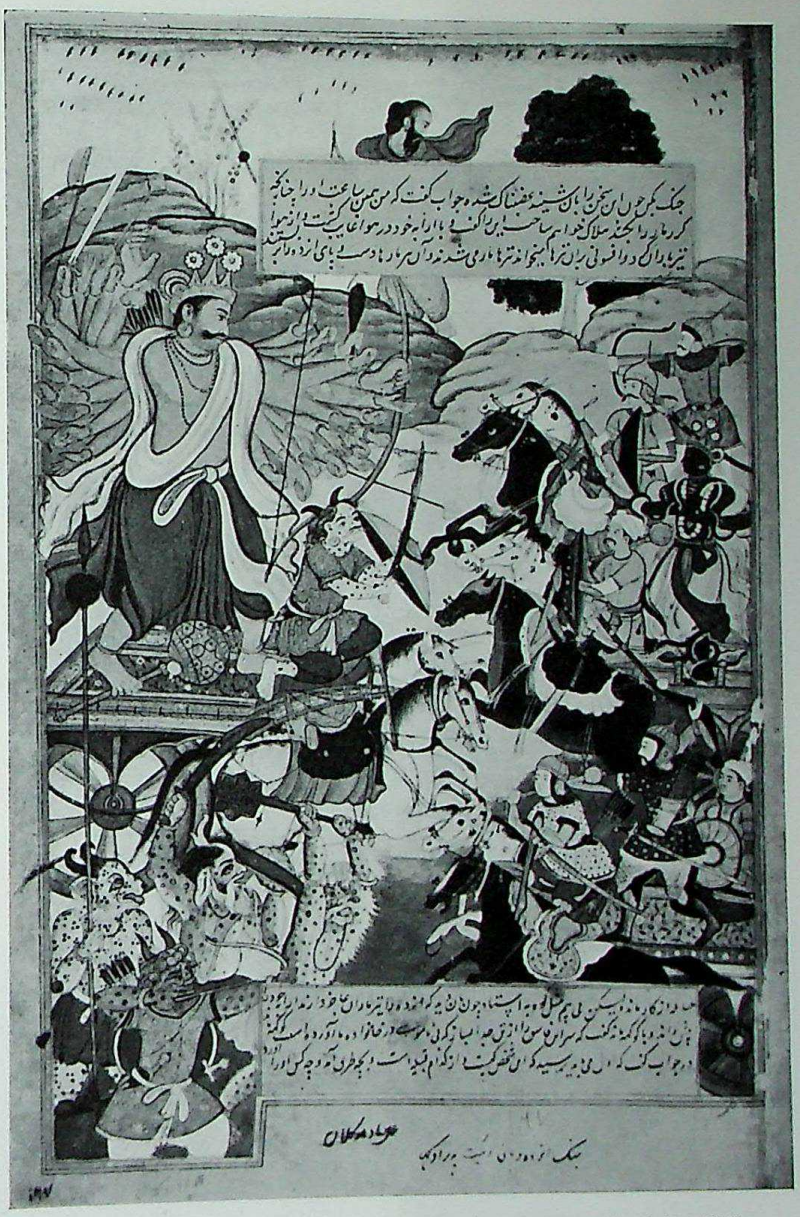

Fig. 224. Krishna fights Bāṇāsura, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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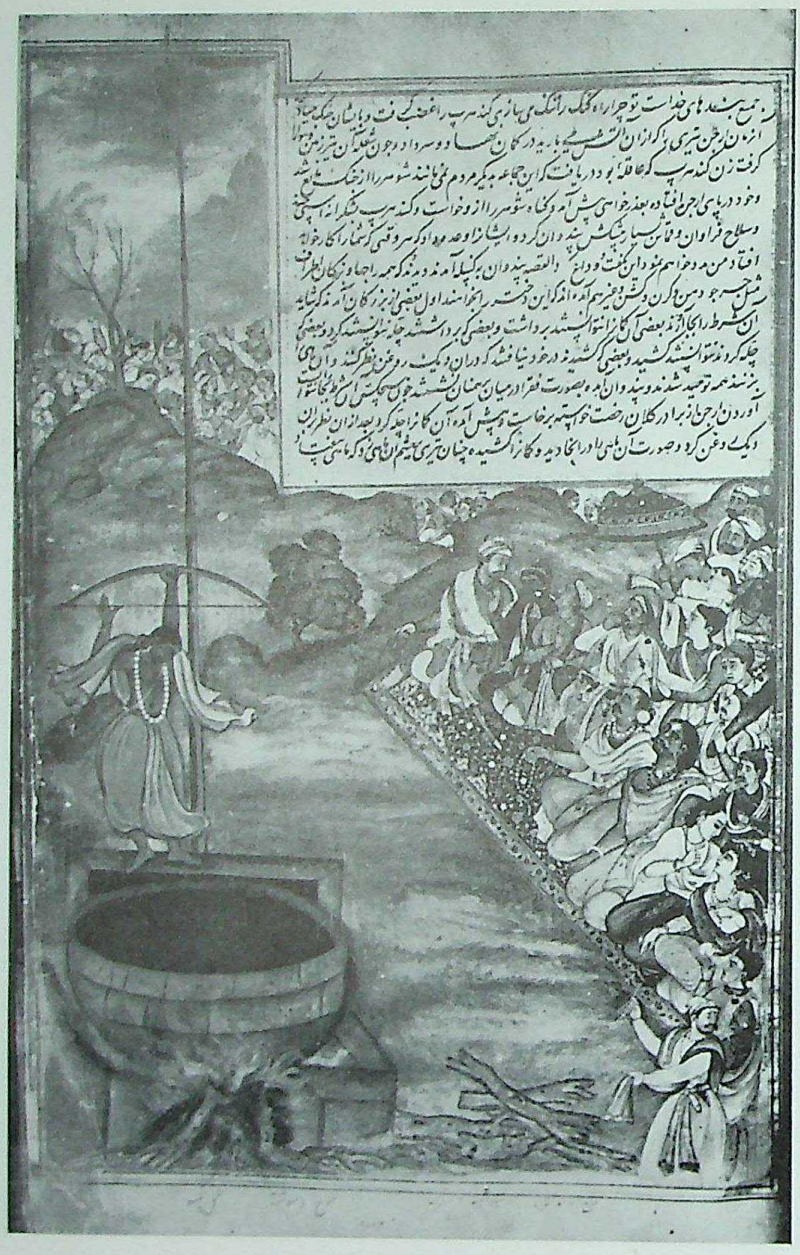

Fig. 225. Draupadi's Svayamvara, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 226. Marriage of Subhadrā, Kulhadar group, 16th century, probably Mewar, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 227. Khāṇḍava-dāha (the burning of the forest of Khāṇḍava), illustration to the Razm Nama, late Mughal, c. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 228. Bhīma fighting Jarāsandha, stone, c. 6th century, Garhwa, State Museum, Lucknow.

Fig. 229. Bhīma kills Jarāsandha, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 230. Krishṇa in Rājasūya sacrifice (?), Arjuna standing by the side of Krishṇa, stone, 5th century, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.

Fig. 231. Sahadeva offers arghya to Krishṇa after he (Krishṇa) kills Śiśupāla, illustration to the Kalāpustaka, c. 1600, University Library, Cambridge (after fig. 64, Vaishnava Iconology in Nepal by P. Pal).

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Fig. 232. Krishṇa kills Śiśupāla, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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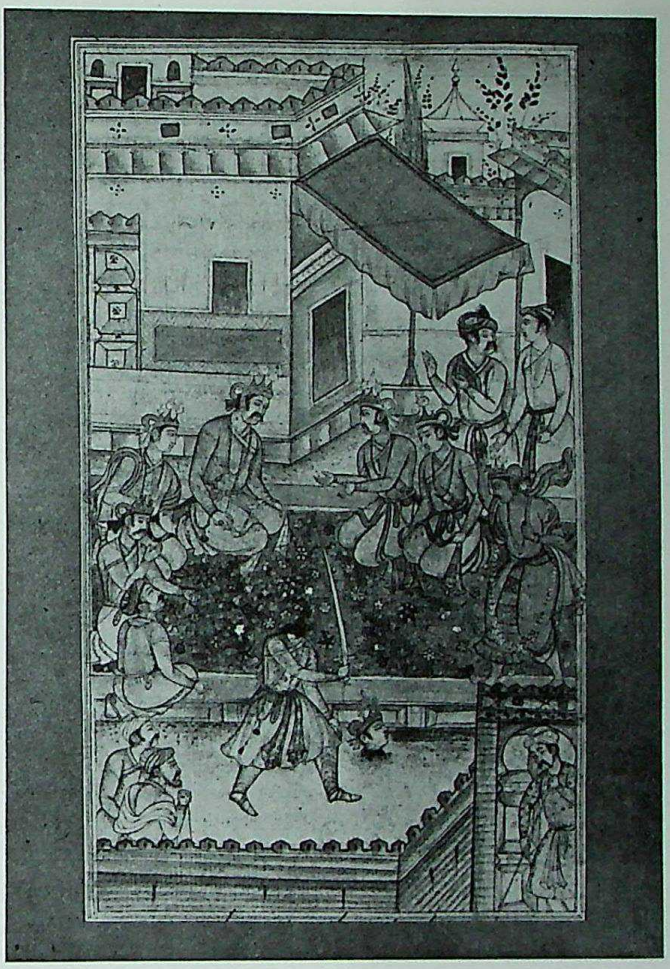

Fig. 233. Krishṇa kills Śiśupāla, illustration to the Razm Nama, early 17th century, Mughal, Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda.

Fig. 234. Krishṇa taking leave of the Pāṇḍavas after the Rājasūya sacrifice, illustration to the Bhāgavata Daśamaskandha, painted by Govinda, son of Nārada, 1611, formerly in Pustak Prakash Fort Library, Jodhpur (after fig. 3, pl. XIX, Lalit Kala, No. 8).

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Fig. 235. Krishṇa kills Śālva, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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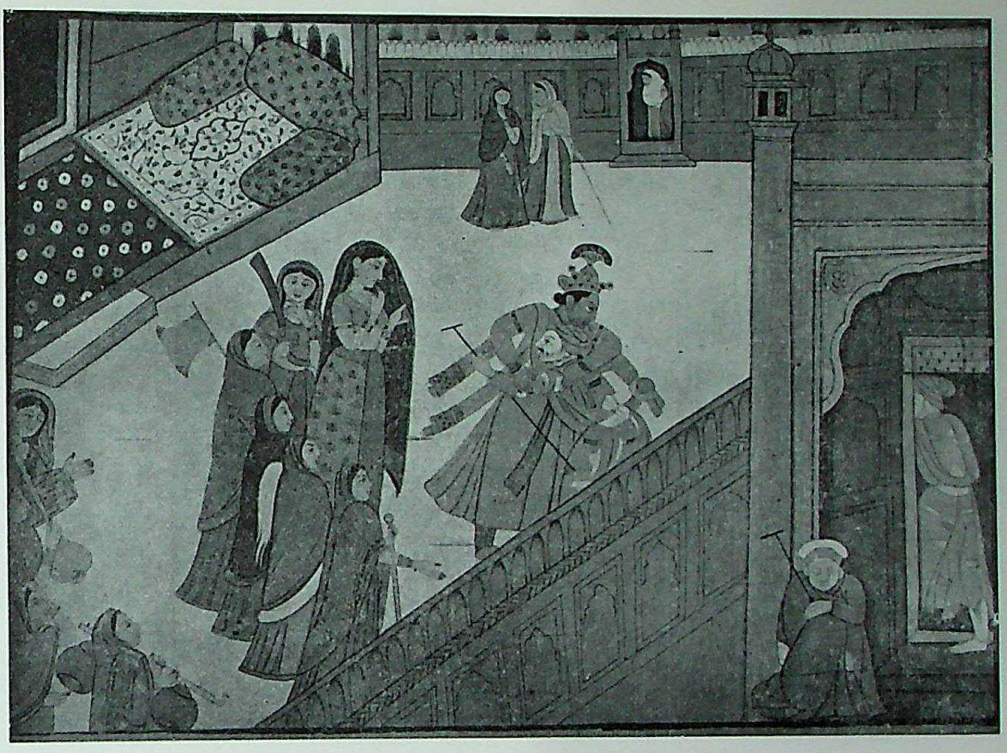

Fig. 236. Krishṇa receiving Sudāmā, Kangra Style, c. 1780, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

Fig. 237. Krishṇa and Sudāmā, stone, Gupta, Deogarh, 5th century, National Museum, New Delhi.

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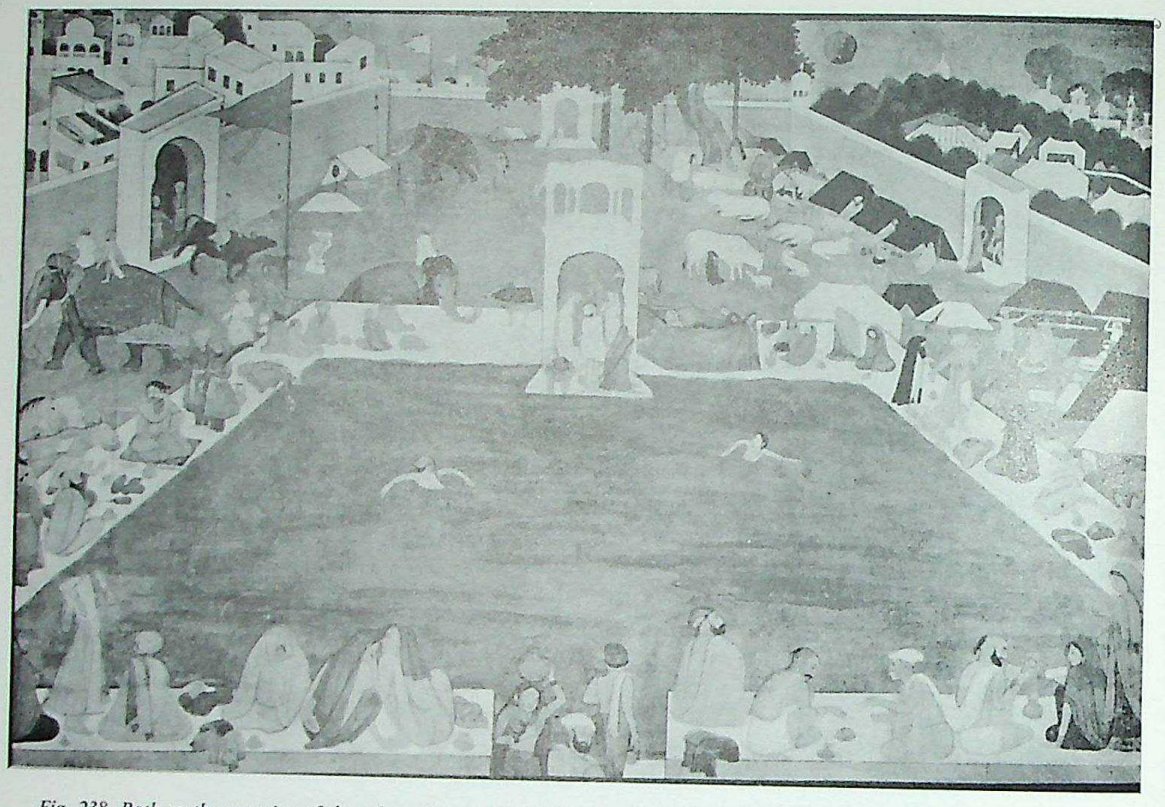

Fig. 238. Bath on the occasion of the solar eclipse at Kurukshetra, painting from the Karuṇābharaṇa Series, Kangra Style, late 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

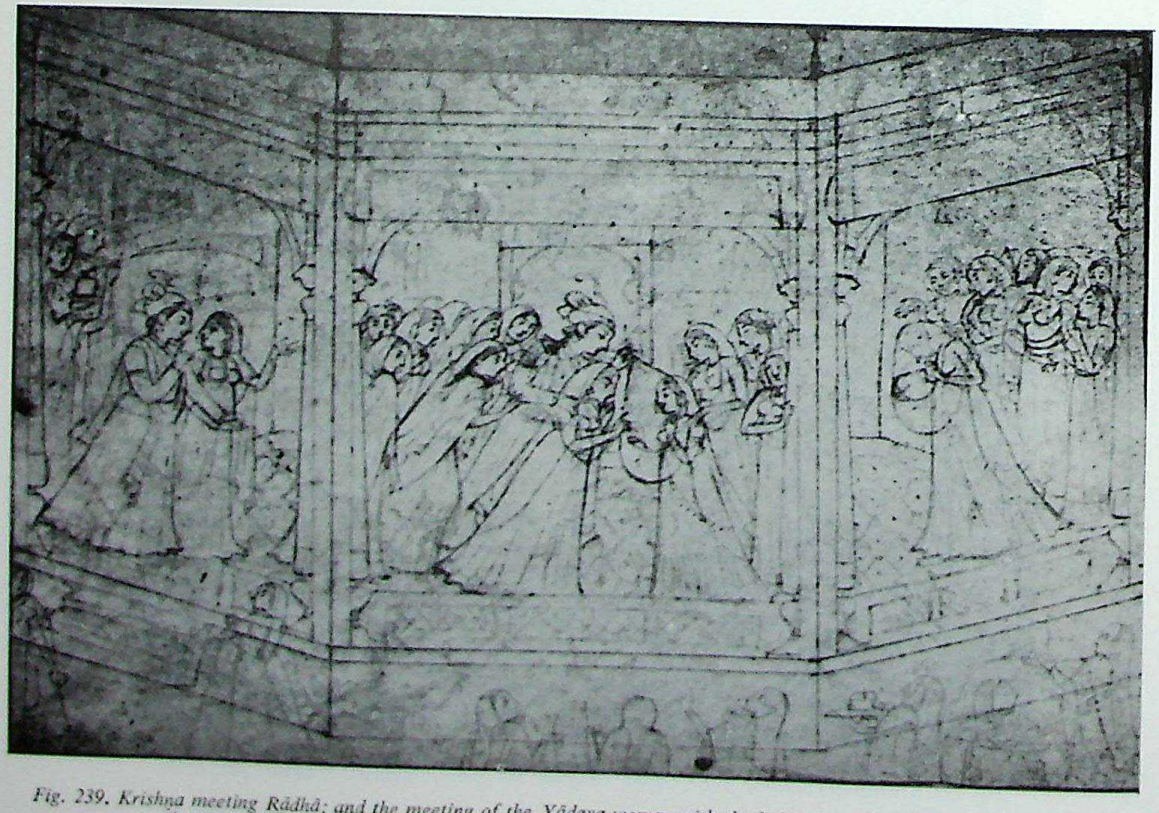

Fig. 239. Krishṇa meeting Rādhā; and the meeting of the Yādava women with the ladies from Vrindavana, drawing from the Karuṇābharaṇa Series, Kangra Style, late 18th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

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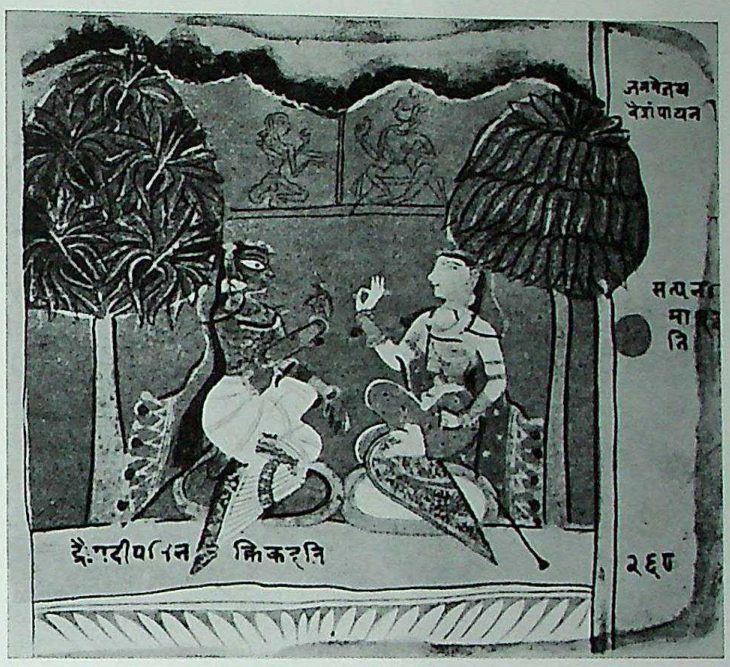

Fig. 240. Conversation between Draupadī and Satyabhāmā, Āraṇyaka Parva of the Mahābhārata, 1516, Asiatic Society, Bombay (after pl. 16, A New Document of Indian Painting—a reappraisal by Karl J. Khandalavala and Moti Chandra).

Fig. 241. Draupadī and Pāṇḍavas before Krishṇa, Udyogaparva, Deccan, Śaka 1668 (1746), National Museum, New Delhi.

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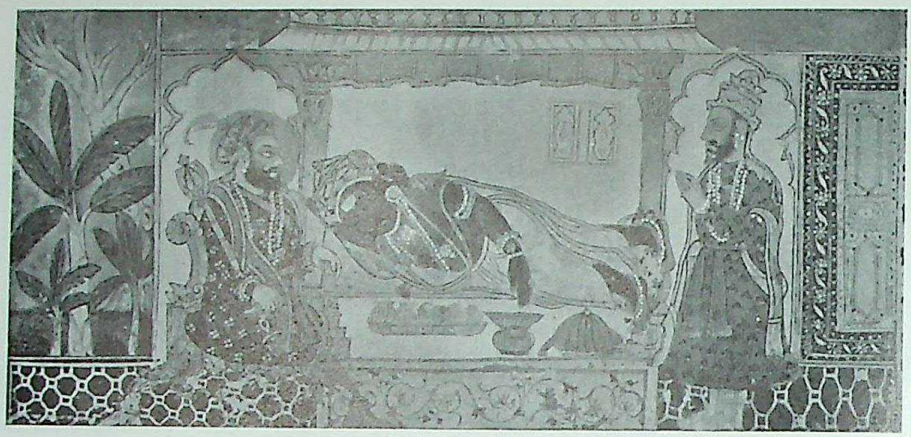

Fig. 242. Duryodhana and Arjuna visiting Krishna for help, Udyogaparva, Deccan, Śaka 1668 (1746), National Museum, New Delhi.

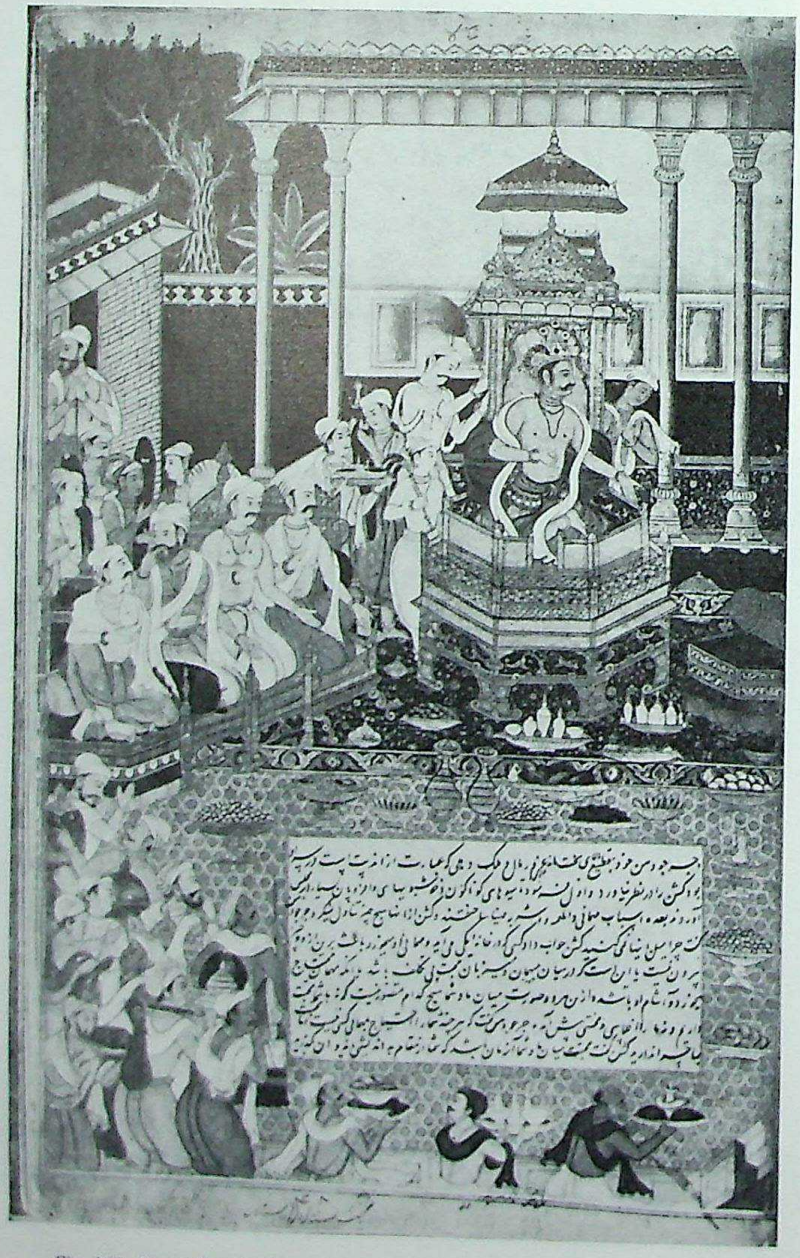

Fig. 243. Duryodhana's Court, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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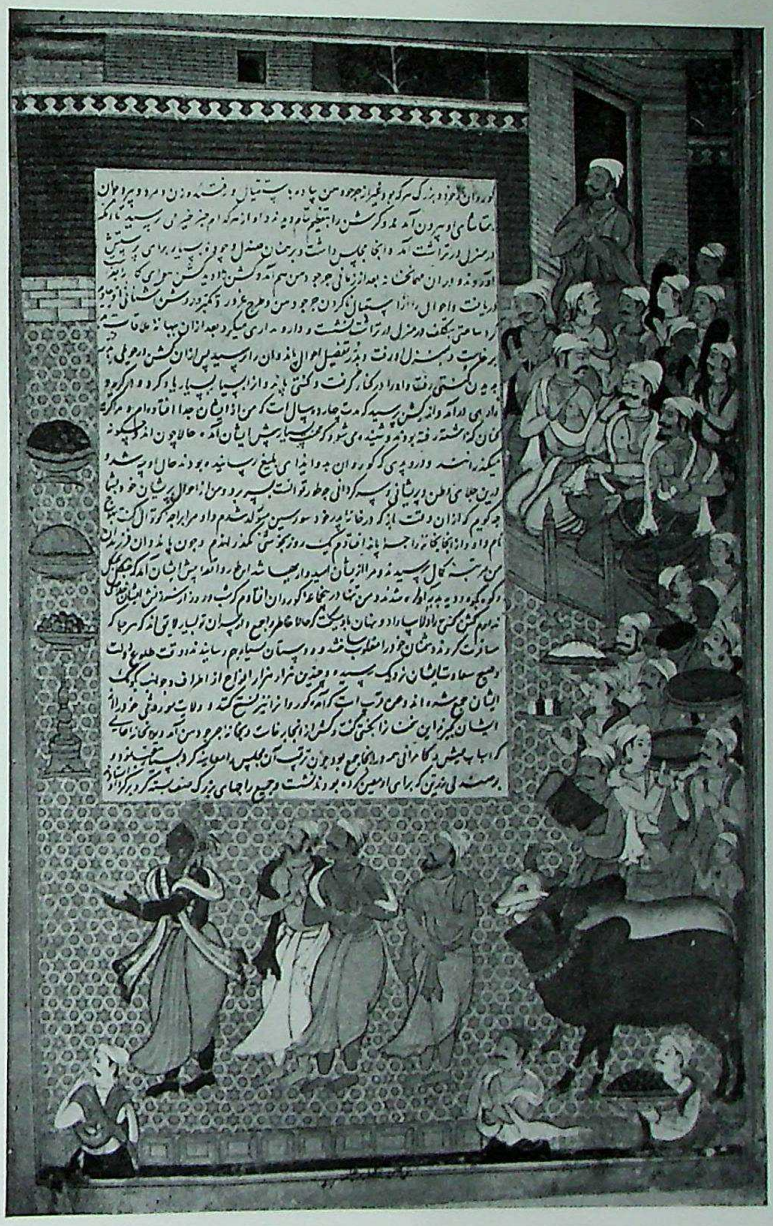

Fig. 244. Krishna arrives at Hastinapur to act as a mediator, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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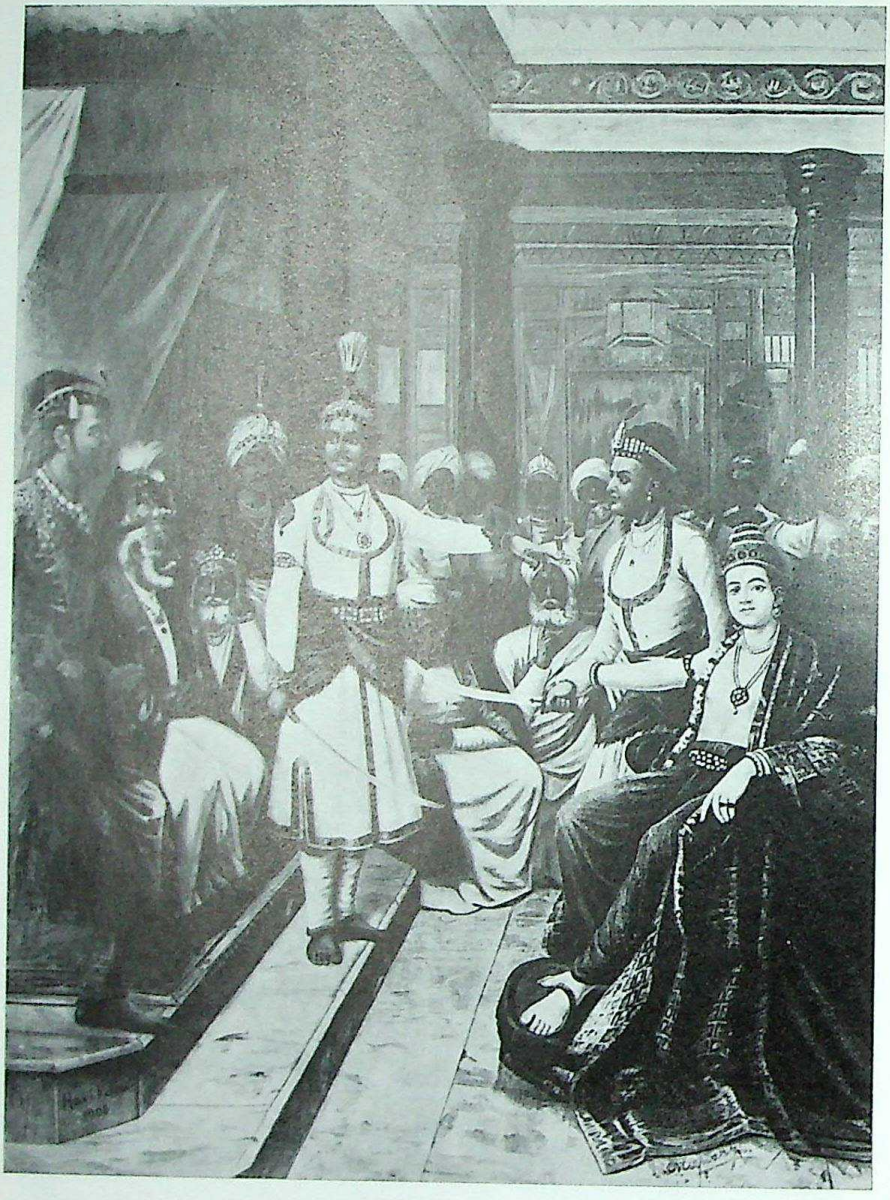

Fig. 245. Krishna as a mediator for peace, painting by Raja Ravi Varma, late 19th century.

Fig. 246. Krishna seated in front of Dhritarâshtra and his advisers, Udyogaparva, Deccan, Śaka 1668 (1746), National Museum, New Delhi.

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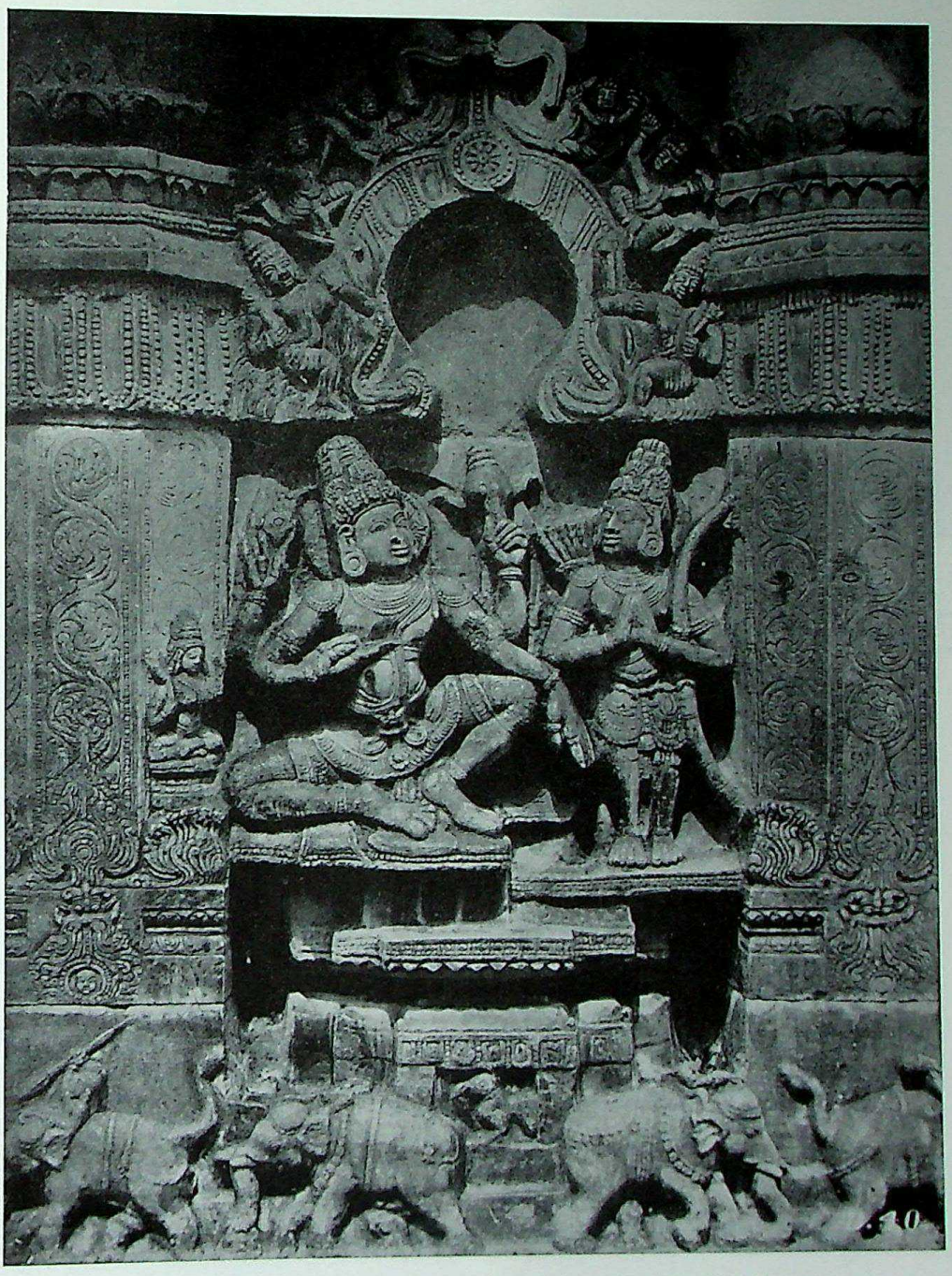

Fig. 247. Krishṇa and Arjuna, Keśavasvāmī Temple, Pushpagiri, c. 1400, Andhra Pradesh.

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Fig. 248. Krishna delivering the sermon of the Bhagavadgītā, Kishangarh, c. 1750, after fig. 55, Krishna Maṇḍala by W.M. Spink.

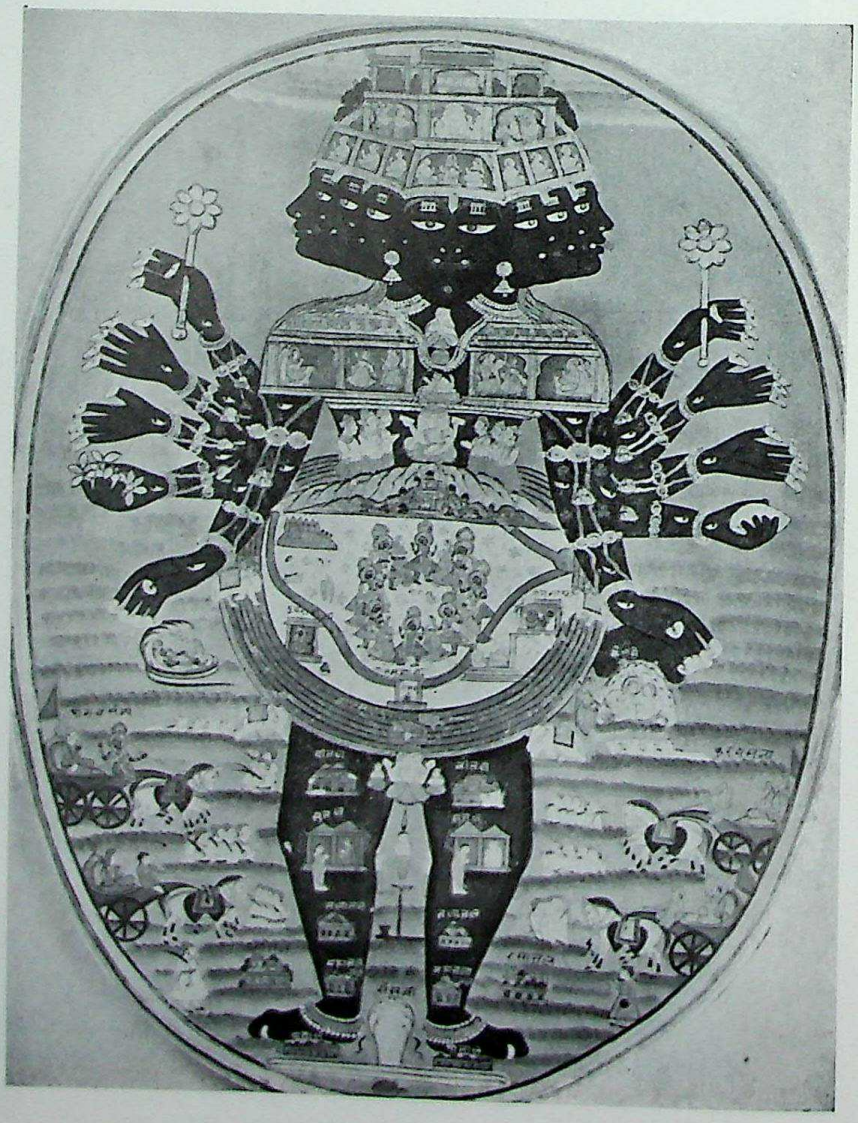

Fig. 249. Viśvarūpa, the all-embracing form of Krishna, Rajasthan, 18th century, Hemangini Babla Collection, Bombay.

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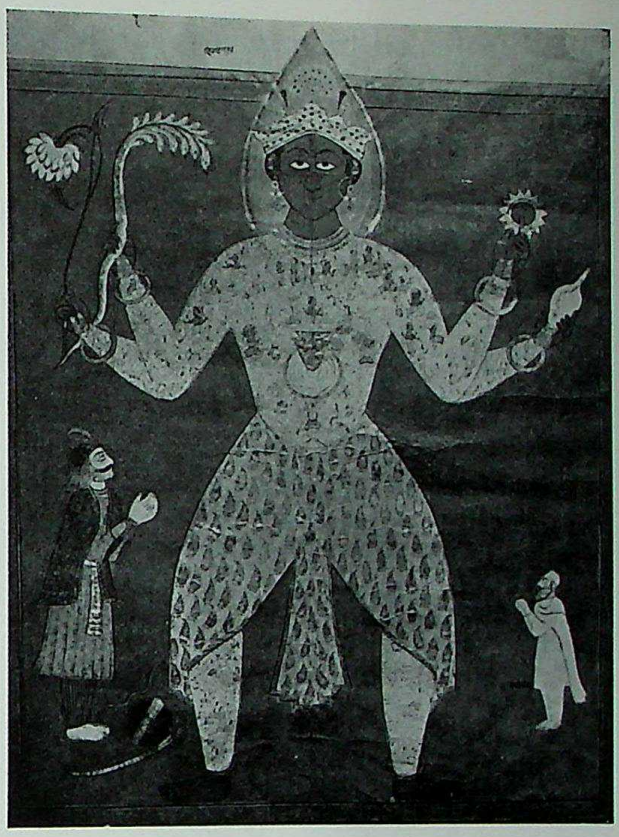

Fig. 250. Viśvarūpa, the all-embracing form of Krishṇa, Kashmir, c. 1850, National Museum, New Delhi.

Fig. 251. Krishṇa breaks his promise and proceeds to kill Bhīshma, Kishangarh, c. 1760, National Museum, New Delhi.

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Fig. 252. Mahābhārata battle (Bhīshma and Arjuna in a single combat), illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 253. Bhīshma on the bed of arrows, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

Fig. 254. Bhīshma on the bed of arrows, Krishṇa Temple lintel, Pāṭan, Nepal, c. 1800.

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Fig. 255. Krishṇa waters the horses, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, late 16th century, British Museum, London.

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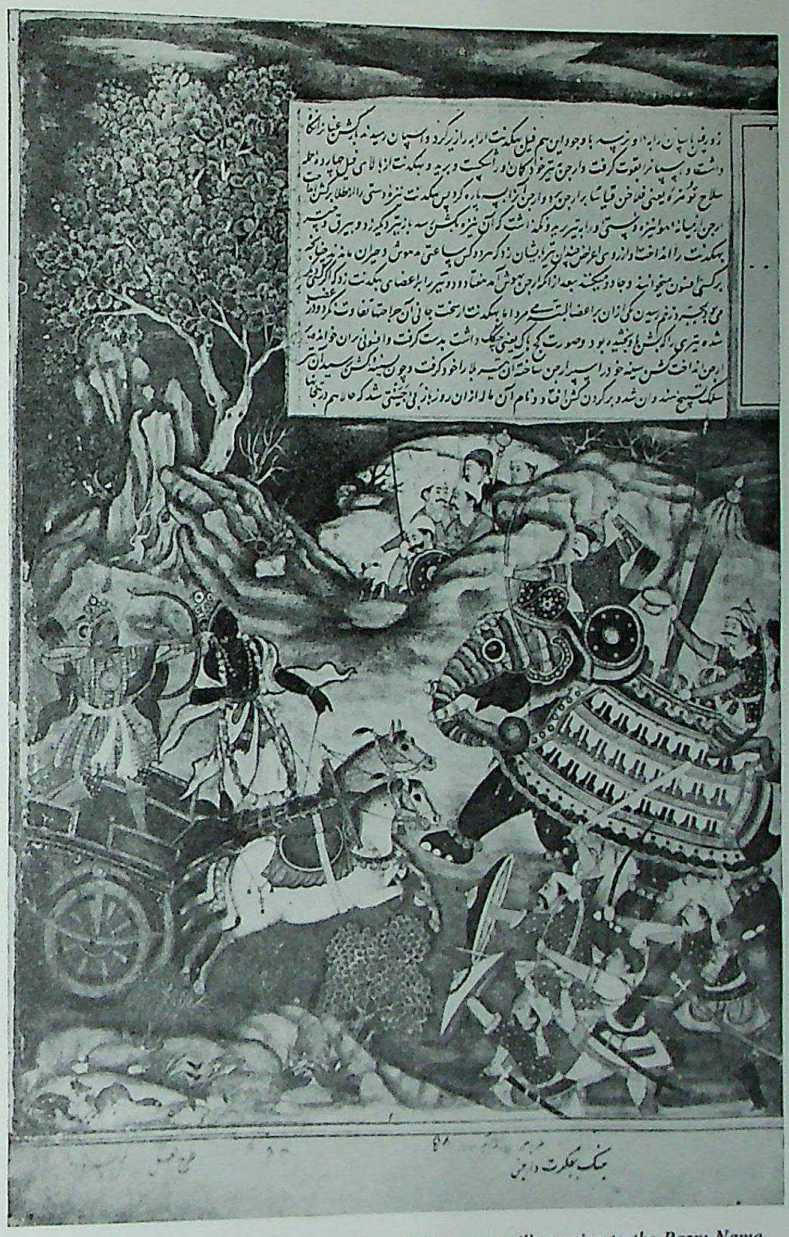

Fig. 256. Krishna saves Arjuna from Bhagadatta's arrow, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 257. Arjuna kills Jayadratha, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 258. Ghaṭotkacha-vadha (Ghaṭotkacha, son of Bhīma killed), illustration to the Razm Nama. Mughal. Akbar period, c. 1585. Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 259. Death of Droṇāchārya, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 260. Arjuna Kills Karna, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 261. Uru-bhaṅga of Duryodhana (Bhīma breaks the thigh of Duryodhana), illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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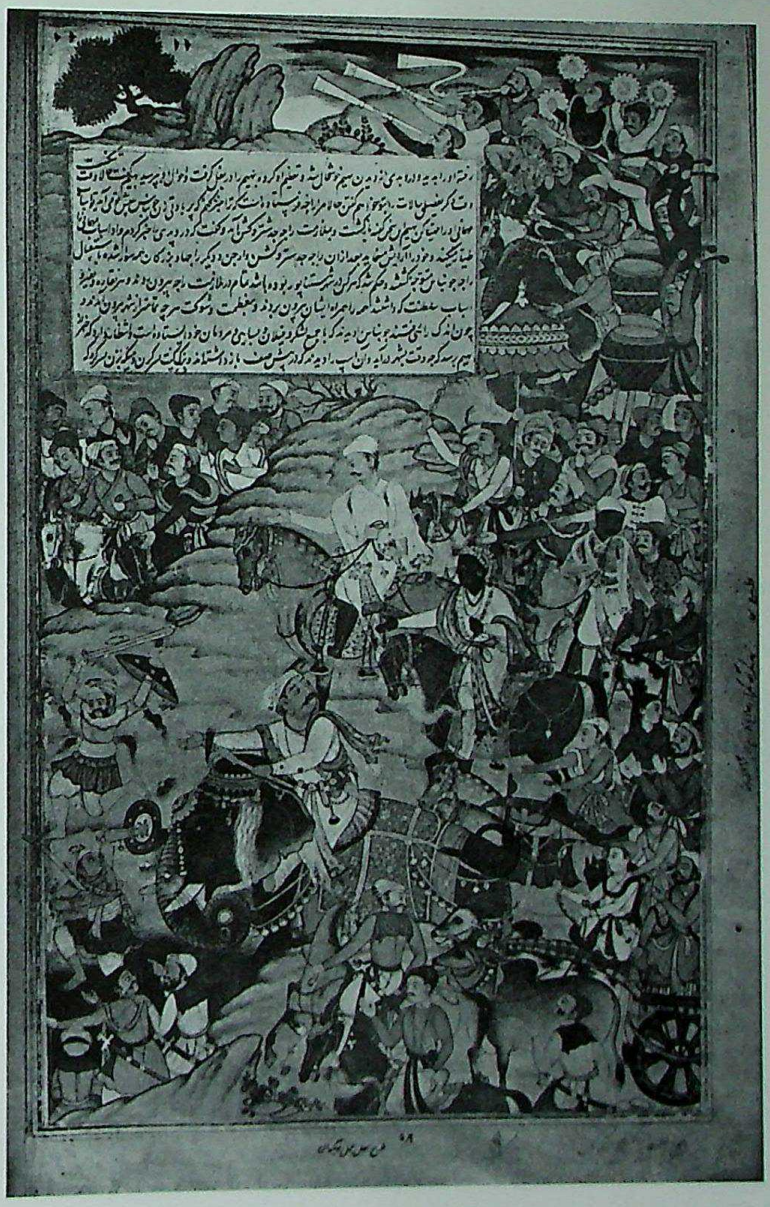

Fig. 262. Reception to king Yuvanāśva, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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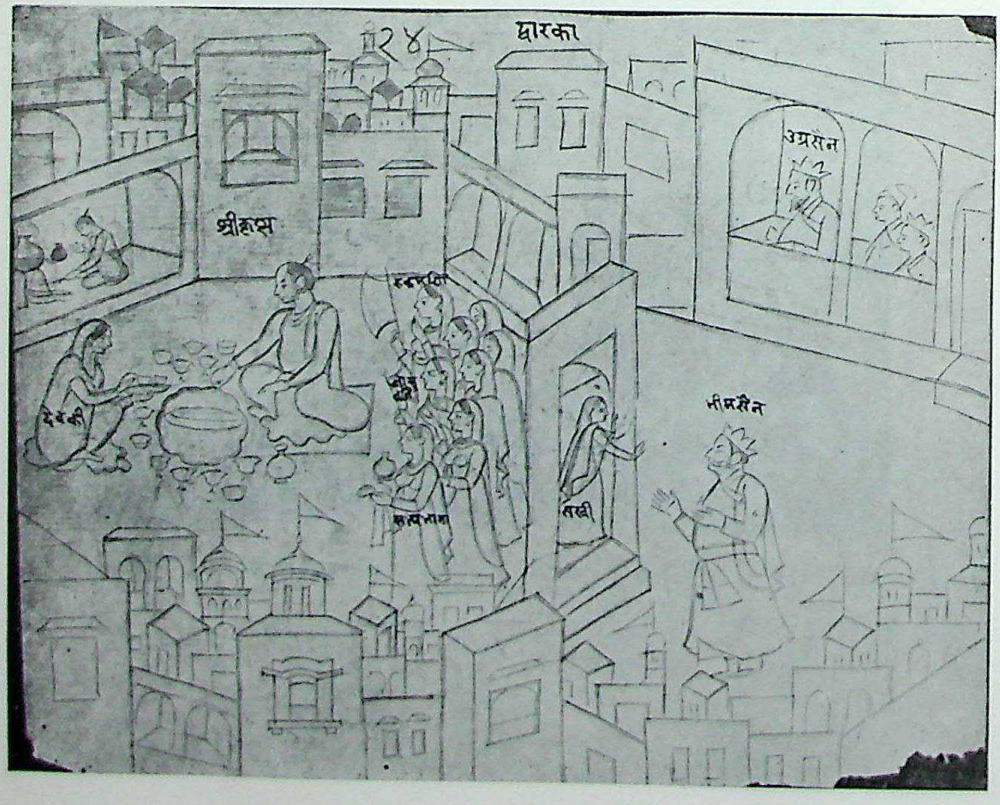
Fig. 263. Bhīma arrives at Dvārakā to invite Krishṇa to the Aśvamedha sacrifice, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

Fig. 264. Bhīma arrives at Dvārakā to invite Krishṇa to the Aśvamedha sacrifice, drawing, Kangra Style, c. 1800, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.



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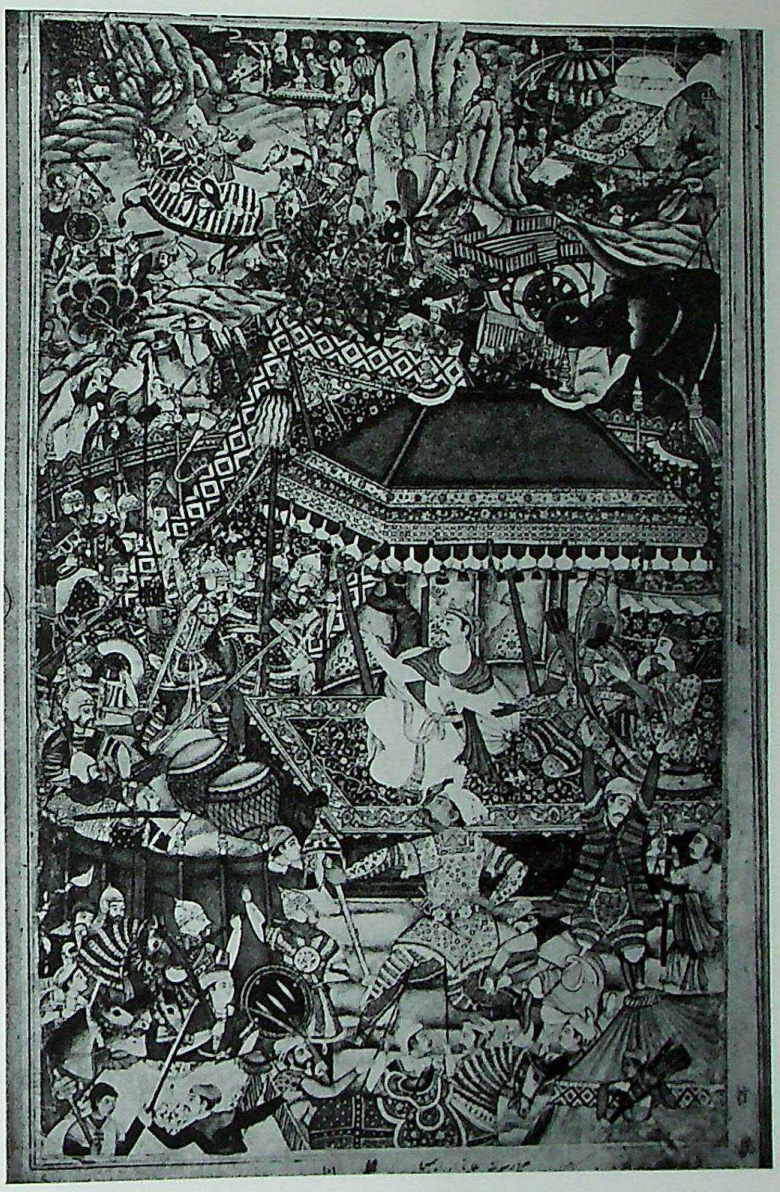

Fig. 265. Yudhishṭhira giving orders for Krishna's reception, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 266. Krishṇa, Bhīma, Kuntī, Subhadrā and other females go to the place, where Arjuna lay, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 267. Eighth adventure of the horse in the country of Tāmradhvaja, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585. Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 268. Krishna restores Parikshit to life, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 269. Andhakas and Yādavas destroying each other at Prabhāsa, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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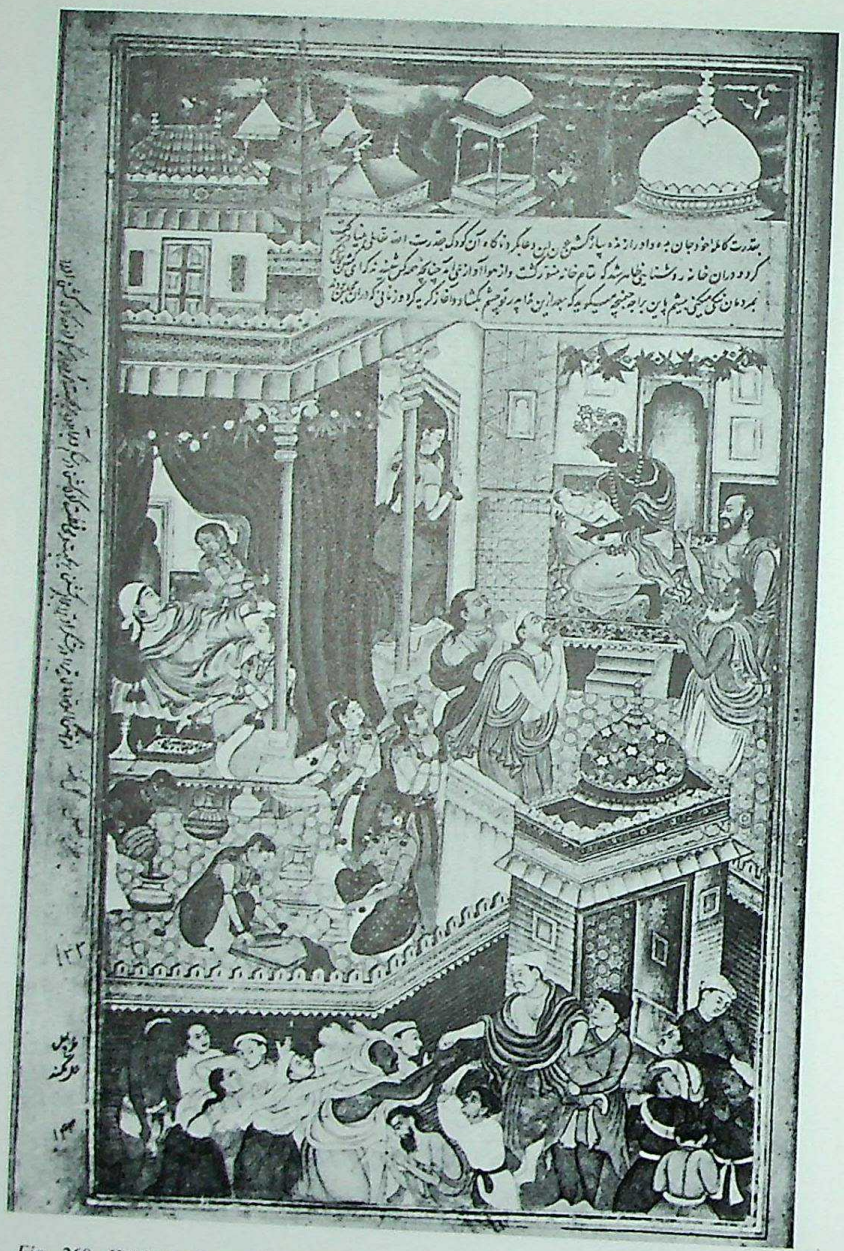

Fig. 268. Krishna restores Parikshit to life, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig. 269. Andhakas and Yādavas destroying each other at Prabhāsa, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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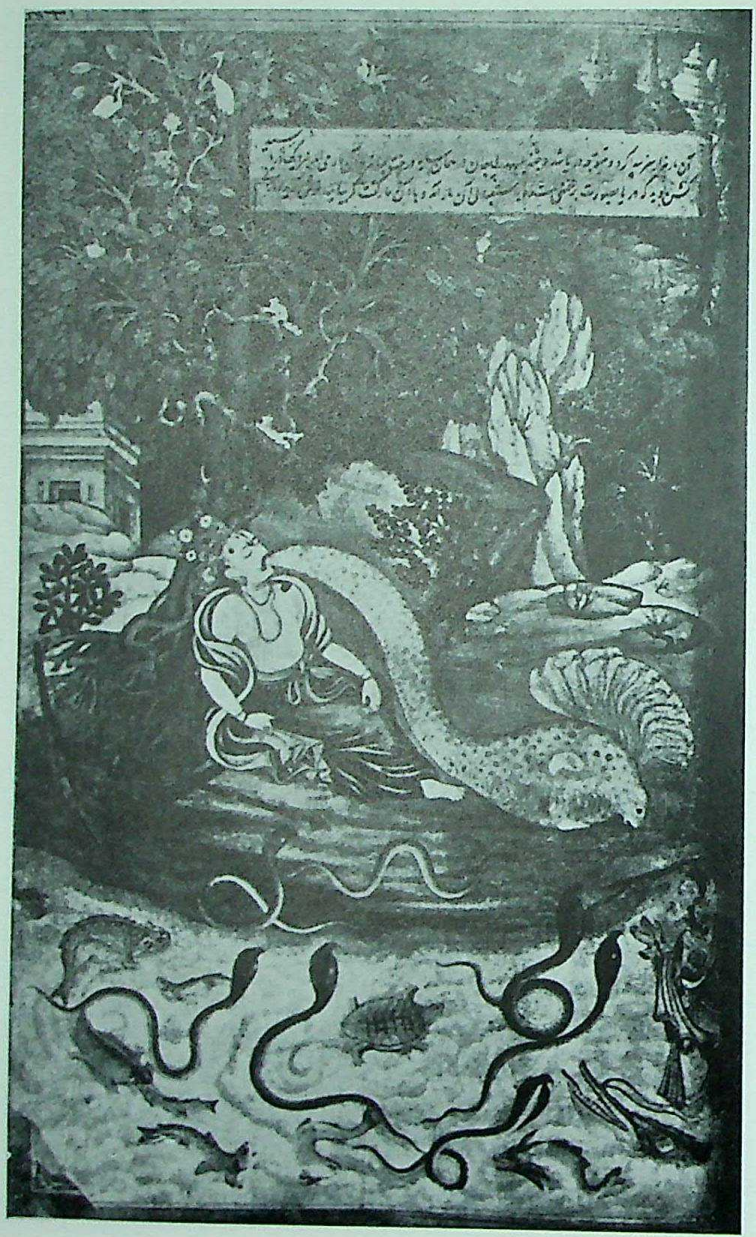

Fig. 270. Death of Balarāma, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

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Fig.271.The hunter Jarā pierced Krishṇa at the heel with an arrow, illustration to the Razm Nama, Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1585, Maharaja of Jaipur Museum, Jaipur.

Fig.272.The hunter Jarā pierced Krishṇa at the heel with an arrow, Rajasthan (?), c. 18th century, Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.

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Fig. 273. Guruvāyurappan, Guruvāyur Temple, Kerala.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. AP —*Agni Purāṇa*
2. BHP —*Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Daśama Skandha*
3. BP —*Brahma Purāṇa*
4. BVP —*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*
5. DBH—*Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*
6. HV —*Harivaṁśa*
7. MBH—*Mahābhārata*
8. PP —*Padma Purāṇa*
9. VP —*Vishṇu Purāṇa*
10. VYP —*Vāyu Purāṇa*

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